

THE PATH OF LIGHT.

BY MARIA LOUISA POOL.

CHAPTER I.

THE strong old Scotch blood in the man thrilled and beat in swelling currents, as he stood on the shore in the summer twilight. Though the line of coast was softly defined and tame in comparison with the rugged, upheaved rocks of those Scottish islands, the swift, damp saltness of the air was the same—and closing his eyes and letting the breeze blow over his uncovered head, he could fancy himself standing on the glittering sands of Mull or Skye, living again his long rambles over land he loved so well.

Standing thus, he thought of the Scandinavian woman who died ages ago, in one of the isles, whose wish it was to be laid on a high hill in the path of the Norway wind. So round the high cairn mourns forever the wind from the old Norse shore. The ardent young Scotchman extended his arms towards the east, exclaiming:

"So let my grave be, where the eastern wind shall blow upon it!"

Then, half ashamed of his ardor, his face grew reticent as usual, and he looked round, fearful that some one had heard him. But he saw nothing but the seabirds wheeling near him, while far down on the sandy beach half a dozen Yankee fishermen were lazily hauling up their boats or counting out the cod they had caught in the day's fishing. For it was in a Massachusetts village, an out-of-the-way sea-coast town, that the nomadic young man had lingered of late, and some influence of earth or air held him there, not

so idle as he seemed; for though the thoughts in his brain were yet vague, they were forming into a shape that should fall pulsing and vehement from his pen.

Behind him the flaming occident glowed over the flat country, giving it a charm that made the scene stay in the memory like the beautiful expression of a plain face. The sea burned like a fire opal before him, its easy, ebbing waves sliding with a soft murmur along the sands, enhancing with that languorous diapason of all music the sadness and longing that possessed him—the spell the hour had cast upon him.

He was twenty-five, but younger than his years in many things—in fashionable vices, in swagger masked in elegance, in impudence.

Singularly pure his face looked now, defined against the bright sky, as he stood on the bluff that shelved down straight to the beach. He looked the fact that not a base or unworthy blood had flowed in the line of his Caledonian ancestors. Sturdy uprightness had been their characteristic; but they had nourished one deadly hate, one invincible heritage of their claniship.

In some son or daughter had flowed an impetuous current, that had descended to this man and made his Scottish traits at once vivid and tinged with romance. A drop of Spanish blood, perhaps—a souvenir of that mighty wrecked Armada—flowed in his veins; for some dark-browed sailor might have married the Scotch lassie who pitied him, cast alone upon a foreign island. But

no such blood showed upon the man's face, save, possibly, in the sudden, furious kindling of cheek and eye, the out-flashing of some hot impulse. He looked the isleman, with his soft, yellow hair, his deep blue eyes, purpling in emotion—his face, when at rest, coldly and clearly cut, no beard hiding the chiselling of lip and chin. His parents, reversing the old legend of the first Lord of the Isles, had made their only child his namesake, and so Somerlid Nicolson seemed doubly sealed to Scotch loves and hates.

He had left Oxford two years before, and possessed by a desire to travel, had passed by unnoticed the temptations to European journeyings, and come over to America, finding here a life as strange and new as his home-life was full of the signs of past centuries. The waves of this side of the Atlantic could not chant the wild songs of Ossian—the mists of these shores hovered over a country too practical to allow of a life of aimless musing.

The scarlet had faded from the sky, and with its disappearance came up a light fog that rose slowly and veiled the far-off ships, making the boats near shore look like ghostly craft upon a sea of gray mist. The summer air was cooled as if by a miracle. The dampness came down like heavy dew. Nicolson left his perch on the bluff and walked slowly down to the spot where a man sat on the sand, hooked knife in hand, skinning fish with that stroke so marvellous to the uninitiated.

"You can cut this fog with a knife in two hours more," said the man, looking up and nodding shortly.

Nicolson, sometimes a little taciturn, nodded also, and remained silent.

"I saw a brig the other side the light when I was out. Hope she'll stay out," went on the fisherman, whose name was Seabury, and at whose house Nicolson had boarded during his stay in the village.

"There's no wind. Of course they'll stay out. They know the coast, I suppose," said Nicolson, looking indifferently off into the gathering darkness.

"What good does knowin' do, when you can't see an inch before your nose?" asked Seabury. "If they only knew enough to keep still; but it's astonishing how they'll try to run a craft."

"There was a brig from Charleston, South Carolina, telegraphed as being down below the light, in the paper this afternoon," said

Nicolson, carelessly, sitting down in the sand and pulling his coat about him.

"Was there?" said Seabury, with sudden anxiety, dropping his knife and involuntarily bringing his hand above his eyes to peer off seaward.

Nicolson looked at him in surprise, but would not question him.

"Our Submit was a comin' home in a brig with Cap'n Nixon. Maybe she's in that. If Nixon aint drunk he'll take care of his craft. No decent person ought to come to grief in a night as still as this, though there's a plaguy sight more wind out there than we know of here."

"Submit is your daughter?" asked Nicolson.

"Yes. She's been South for a year with my sister, and her last letter said she was coming home as soon as Nixon started."

"She'll not come in a steamer, then?" said the young man, more for the sake of responding than for any special interest.

"No, she aint got much money, and it's cheaper in the brig."

Nicolson did not say more. He sat wondering what kind of a girl this daughter was, with her name smacking so strongly of Puritanism. A robust girl, whose physique overshadowed her intellect, but still possessing a shrewd and ready insight into the business of life. How curiously strange these people were to him, with their stories of the Mayflower, and of the old time of the Indian King Philip wars. Such an old time appeared to him but a few days back; for were not his old legends of the dim, unreal days of Fingal and the giants?

The light deepened and the fog thickened. It was fast becoming, as the fisherman had prophesied, of almost solid thickness.

Nicolson and Seabury walked slowly up to the house, half a mile away. A silence had fallen upon the old man, and the thoughts of the younger were out in the bay, where the unknown brig rolled upon the waters.

By nine o'clock, contrary to all expectation of the weatherwise, the fog had changed to a fine, driving rain, and the wind was blowing strongly from the northeast.

Seabury walked restlessly up and down the little kitchen, muttering to himself. At last he wrapped his shaggy greatcoat about him, with the exclamation, "I can't stand this, anyhow," and strode out into the wet darkness; while his wife stood at the door, her pale face peering after him.

Nicolson, smoking by the fire, threw his cigar away, a faint flush mounting to his forehead, the wild spirit of the night sounding a call to him. He plunged along the sodden road in the direction of the beach. The air, the night, the hurtling of the blast, all were like an intoxication to his youth and high health. The days of his childhood came back to him—those days when he had hung over the verge of rocky precipices, gathering with agile fingers his cap full of birds' eggs, while his tartan whirled in the air, the frightened flock screaming above him; and below, down hundreds of feet, the sea-foam swirled as if hungry for him. He had never been afraid, and now he felt the power of a dozen men within him.

There was no one on the beach save Seabury, whose figure he did not discern until he was close upon him. It was not the season for the fiercest storms and wrecks, and no one, save these two, thought of coming out.

Seabury turned and saw the young man beside him, and a look of thankfulness came to his face. He was half disabled himself, for rheumatism had stiffened his leg, and something of his old strength had gone. He looked with pride upon the stalwart youth near him, whose eyes seemed to emit flashes of blue lightning as they looked off seaward.

Neither attempted to speak. They walked back and forth, buffeted by wind and spray. An hour passed thus, and still something held them there. They heard from the waters no booming sound of distress. The rain drove on from the east blindly. It had grown lighter within the hour, and they knew that the moon had risen.

Suddenly Nicolson grasped the old man's arm and pointed over the roaring waves.

They saw, like a vision in a dream, a boat filled with men, with only one woman in their midst; and even from that distance the fond old man fancied he could see with what a wild pleading her eyes were fixed upon that familiar shore, for in that one stormy glimpse Seabury recognized his daughter.

The two men on the beach had hardly seen that boat, before like a spectre it had vanished, and over it had rolled a bellowing, remorseless breaker, the heartless foam tossing gayly in the air.

"O my God! it is she," cried Seabury, in unconscious exclamation. "The men may swim; but I know she can't in this sea."

He was wildly tearing off his coat, forgetting his infirmities that would make him powerless

in the water. Nicolson's nervous hand was on his arm.

"I can swim," he said, hoarsely, his lips to the man's ear; "but you cannot. I shall bring her to you."

His coat was off, his hat bared his yellow curls to the storm, and he caught up the rope Seabury had brought and flung upon the sands, knotting it deftly about his waist, then with an exulting and challenging fire on his face, he leaped down into the water, which rolled over him at the first plunge.

When he rose upon the next smaller wave, Seabury saw the boat appear again, turned over, with two men clinging to it. No others were visible; at least so he thought, for the semi-darkness tormented him now more than the wind or rain.

The phosphorescent, faint glare of the water aided the swimmer somewhat, and to Nicolson's accustomed eyes the boat showed when one unaccustomed to the sea would not have seen it.

He swam bravely, but his slowness was torture to him. Before him, in the dim light, he saw the floating hair of a woman, the wet locks shining on the water—then it was lost to him, and he struggled blindly after it.

Though the waves almost stunned him, though sometimes he lost a foot or two, he never for an instant doubted of his success, and the moment came when he grasped the woman with a grasp of iron, and giving himself up to less severe motion, he felt himself pulled through the water by the rope attached to his waist.

The welcome sand was gained at last, and he struggled to his feet to have the burden he bore snatched from his arms by Seabury, who waded in to meet him, regardless of the waves that nearly knocked him down.

Three of the men had already been buffeted up to the shore, and lay panting, conscious only of a sublime sense of safety.

Nicolson, seeing that Seabury held his daughter with monopolizing clasp, that he would repel with fierce paternal instinct any offer in that first moment of meeting, walked to the side of one of the men, bending over to peer into the sea-wet face.

"D—d coast this," said the man, with the unmistakable intonation of a Cape Cod sailor, as he struggled up to a sitting posture. "Who'd a thought ye could a got up such a blow this time o' year?"

By the time he had ceased speaking he had extricated a small flask from the side-

pocket of his jacket, and had found the mouth of it with celerity.

"You carry your comfort with you," said Nicolson, curtly.

"You may bet on that. How's the gal?"

"The lady is safe," replied the young man, experiencing a slight feeling of disgust that "the gal" should be mentioned in such a frame of whiskey.

"Give some of that stuff to the other fellows. I see they are able to move about," he said, and walked to where Seabury was kneeling on one knee, holding his daughter clumsily but very tenderly, trying roughly and in vain to restore her to consciousness.

Nicolson stooped to look at her, then ran back to the man he had just left, whom he found assisting his wrecked companions. He asked for the bottle, and offered it to Seabury, saying:

"It won't harm her. It does not appear to me that she has swallowed much water."

He saw that the old man's hands trembled pitifully—that he could not force the warm drops between the girl's pale lips.

"I'm all unstrung," he said, in a quivering voice. "Do give it to her."

Nicolson's steady hand introduced the liquid into her mouth. Its unaccustomed fire awakened the dormant energies. Nicolson stood near until in the semi-darkness he fancied he saw signs of returning life, then he walked away and devoted himself to the assistance of the men, while Seabury carefully called into full life the suspended animation which had so frightened him.

"I can help you home now," he said, eagerly, tenderly smoothing back the wet hair. "Mother's waiting—fearfully 'fraid of dreadful news. Lean on me, my darling."

The rough fisherman's reticent heart was opened by the danger, and he who was so chary of words of endearment, lavished them now on his rescued child.

Nicolson, looking where they had stood, saw two figures moving slowly from the place. His first impulse was to follow them, but he knew she was safe, and his work for the moment was with the poor wretches on the beach.

Two hours later, having seen the men safely housed in the fishing-huts that stood among the rocks a little above high-tide mark, Nicolson strode up the stony road that led to Seabury's house. He felt a natural curiosity to see the girl he had brought from the water, and in addition, it had been so

long since he had seen a new face, that there was a trifle of excitement visible in his appearance as he gently pushed open the kitchen door and walked in.

The glowing fire there made him for the first time sensible of the dripping clothes beneath his greatcoat. The room was empty. He stood a moment by the fire, upbraiding himself for the selfish but fleeting feeling we all know when shut out as strangers from some great joy. Then he turned and went up to his room, where he put on dry clothing, saying to himself that he believed he had lingered long enough here; he would push on now to the great cities of this new world. He could not explain why he had already stayed so long.

A voice at the foot of the stairs called his name.

"Well," he said, in a surprised tone, for he had not expected to be remembered again that night. There was still so much of youth, almost of childhood in him, that his heart was open to loneliness or joy in an unusual degree.

He had forgotten the service he had rendered; but the very act of that service had rendered his soul painfully alive to emotions intenser than ordinary.

"Come down," said Mrs. Seabury; and he heard the gladness in her accent. "Come down with dry clothes on. I must take care of you, or you'll be having a fever."

Nicolson went down stairs, sat by the stove and drank the steaming tea she gave him, until the moist glow told of the efficacy of her prescription. He sat and watched the little woman as she bustled about, going every few moments into the inner room, from whence Nicolson heard the murmur of talking—the sound of a voice womanly and refined—at least so it seemed from that distance.

Mrs. Seabury's face bore upon it a light that almost made the plain features beautiful; but, though absorbed, she was not unmindful of Nicolson, and occasionally cast nurse-like glances upon him, with which was mingled a devout gratitude.

"Your daughter is quite recovered?" questioned Nicolson, with slight diffidence in his tone.

"She is weak, but to-morrow I think she'll be well. Would you like to see her to-night?" looking at him as if now he had but to ask anything of them.

"She should rest at present," he hastened to say, with the shy politeness that was

peculiar to him. He added, "I shall be happy to see her when she is entirely recovered."

"She will want to see you. She is not an ungrateful child," responded her mother.

Nicolson sipped his tea in silence, wondering if the child was such a plain, matter-of-fact person as the father and mother, and if she had as good a heart.

"She will consider it her duty to thank me with great fervency," he inwardly said; "as if I deserved such gratitude for an involuntary sea-bath; though in truth I did save her life, and being young, she is glad of it."

"I am not expecting thanks," he said, aloud. "If the service was great to her, it cost me very little to perform it."

Mrs. Seabury expostulated against such a view of the case; then, unable to keep away, she disappeared within the room from whence came the sound of conversation.

Nicolson desisted from herb tea and betook himself to his cigar, vacantly watching the smoke wreaths until they grew dimmer and dimmer, and he was asleep in his chair.

He roused himself at last, and rose to go to bed, fancying with clouded brain, as he lit his candle, that he saw a woman's drapery, and not that of Mrs. Seabury, sweeping by the open door of the kitchen.

CHAPTER II.

THE next day when Nicolson came down to breakfast, he looked quickly round the room in search of the woman he had seen, yet not seen with any idea of her appearance.

He was alone in the kitchen. He saw Seabury driving his cow down the road, and his wife going through the barnyard with her basket in search of fresh eggs. He was standing by the window, looking beyond the barn to the fleecy horizon. It was a pleasant day which had just begun. The west wind of summer stirred the trees, with no memory of yesterday's fierce northeaster.

A girl came quickly from the other room, and hesitated a little as she saw the kitchen was only occupied by Nicolson. But he had heard her and turned, and at sight of her—for he was not used to female society—his unhackneyed face kindled faintly.

The slight awkwardness she had felt at first disappeared, and she said:

"You are Mr. Nicolson?" advancing and holding out her hand as she spoke.

He took the hand and held it while she said:

"I am Submit Seabury, as I suppose you know."

His tongue refused to frame any conventional expression of pleasure, and he only bowed, dropping the hand, thinking, "now she will thank me."

And indeed it was in accordance with all rules for her to thank her preserver then and there. But she did not do it, wisely resolving to defer it until some time when her thanks would be better received.

She made some ordinary remark about the beauty of the morning; and the man, while he responded, was surprised again at the depth of sweetness in her voice—not sweetness alone, but holding a suggestion of strength, a hint of fervid emotions he had been taught not to expect in New England. It was Rossini who so loved the contralto voice, and gave to its singing those strains of harmony which only such a voice can express—the sweet passion, the pure sensuousness, the tone which appeals through all the exquisite of our senses to the divine within us. Something in the girl's voice made Nicolson remember vividly the contralto solos of Rossini's music he had heard in London. Then he looked again at her face. Did that hold anything in unison with her voice? The eyes were lowered as he looked, and the pale, dark face made him say, "nothing," with disappointment; but even as he thought the word, she lifted her eyes to speak to him, and he recalled the involuntary thought, for her eyes might have been the fires from whence her voice drew its peculiar power.

It is a pity you can only tell the color of eyes and there stop. Those of this girl were large and softly brown, but they were also full of light, capable alike of flaming or dreaming, and being also exponents of her character, they revealed that if she attracted at all, it was for a lifetime, and that attraction would be to a man either his safest or most dangerous experience.

Nicolson had not expected to find this girl with the aroma of society about her. He had been prepared to meet a Yankee girl whose bashfulness would put him immediately at his ease, for he was not a ladies' man. With fashionable life it was apparent Submit Seabury had had nothing to do. But it appeared as if her breeding came by inheritance, "from some English or Scotch great-grandparents," Nicolson thought, with natural complacency.

She stood before him now in the plainest of dresses, her hair arranged simply, a marked

pallor on her face, and dark circles about her eyes, the lingering effects of last night's danger; but she impressed Nicolson with a sense of dignity and power, even with something more subtle, a feeling of some æsthetic force, sweet and fine, that entered his being unconsciously, only to know afterwards, and never to be analyzed.

"You are entirely recovered, I hope," he said, not so much from politeness as in the hope to detain her, as she was moving towards the outer door.

She paused and looked back, saying:

"Thank you—yes, save for a little languor. And you—" looking at him earnestly, "I am not acquainted with your face, and do not know but it is always colorless. You look fatigued."

The young man was conscious of a deep pleasure in knowing that her eyes were upon him. The warm glow at his heart mounted slowly to his face, faintly tinging its marble-like hue, that was only slightly bronzed by sun and air.

"I have the misfortune to lack color," he said. "It is something acquired as a student, and which I cannot discard. I am not at all fatigued."

During the time he was speaking, he was endeavoring to think of something by which he might detain her; but, bending her head in reply to his remark, she walked down the path that led to the road, stopping every few steps to greet with caressing fingers the old-fashioned shrubs and flowers that bloomed in the little, unkept garden.

"She walks well," said the man, thinking himself very critically and coolly judging her, as he leaned forward to watch her, a sparkling light in his sea-blue eyes that made them like the sheeny water.

Submit looked out over the level, sandy country spread between the village and the beach. But she was not thinking of that resemblance. As she stepped again slowly over that dear old path, the perfume coming to her like the tenderest of greetings, she had thought, "The young Scotchman is a gentleman, with a patent of nobility in his face." Then she had forgotten him in the quiet gladness of her recognition of home surroundings. Her look kindled as it roamed over the limitless blue; in the pure sunshine of that moment she could not even shudder at the thought of the night before. But that time came to her with a glow of enthusiastic gratitude to the hand that had saved her.

"How can I frame words to thank him?" she asked herself. "He does not look like one who would care to have me walk up and thrust my thanks in his face."

One or two neighbors passed by and stopped at the gate, where Nicolson saw her cordially greet them—noted how the rough hands grasped the shapely hand of the woman.

With a little foolish fastidiousness, Nicolson slightly objected as he saw, furthermore, how she talked with them with an ease and cordiality that made their weather-beaten features relax from their setness. "Of course they like her, and yet she does not look like one who would be a general favorite."

An uncouth open wagon drove slowly up to the gate, and the farmer on the seat, after heartily greeting the girl, said:

"I didn't know you was to home, but I guess this letter'll be just as welcome as though I'd brought it thinkin' to find you. They wanted to know at the post-office ef I was goin' by here. Who ever wrote that was posted about your movements, eh? Bold hand, too." And the man glanced significantly at Submit as she took the letter.

Nicolson heard the words, and savagely muttered an expletive below his breath:

"Why do the boors always talk to a girl like that?" he muttered. "She ought to have her letters in peace—and her lovers, too," with a grim smile, turning away and sauntering slowly into the barnyard, where the hens were chattering over their corn. They did not fly at his familiar presence, and he stood there, absently watching Seabury as he did his morning "chores." He heard a near step, and Submit came towards him, with something of her pallor gone.

"I was still in love with life," she said, standing a moment silent, "and I like to tell you that I am glad to be alive on such a morning as this. I never was facile with spoken thanks, Mr. Nicolson. You will greet this with love, I know—let it speak for one who is awkward at speech, particularly when deeply moved." She put in his hand a tiny bouquet of heath and broom-blossoms, then turned to fondle the dog who had bounded to her side; but she saw the sudden access of emotion, the uncontrollable and beautiful softening of his eyes, the tenderness of his mouth.

He bent over the flowers, the years of his childhood coming back to him, then he took the girl's hand with an impetuous gesture:

"I love them! They belong to my very life! I do not know why I stay away from home so long." Then, his reserve returning to him, he said, "Where did you get them? You have not a magic wand to call them into bloom the moment you appear?"

"I am not an enchantress, or I should have rescued myself last night. I also love the flowers, and mother cherishes two or three plants of them in her own room, and they were in bloom to greet my return."

"They ought to be sentient enough to know of your coming," he said, earnestly, and then in the silence that followed, he added: "Why do you like them so especially? Is it not strange in an American girl?"

"But American girls have whims," she said, in a light way that he thought veiled some deeper feeling, "and one of my fancies is to have Scotch wild-flowers."

"You pay a Scotchman the greatest of compliments," he said, thinking a shade of thought had settled on her face, an intangible melancholy in her eyes.

Seabury came lumbering down from the barn, his bluff face glowing.

"You know that young man saved your life, Submit," he said, in his tactless way.

"Pray do not let us speak of it," said Nicolson, carefully adjusting his bouquet, and angry with the intrusion.

"Yes, I know it," said Submit, quietly, "and I hope Mr. Nicolson understands that I am grateful."

"Wall, I am glad of it," Seabury said, looking in some surprise at the two who took things so coolly. "But there aint words to tell what I feel about it. I could go on talking to the end of time, and then not have said half, either. He did the noble thing, by George! and he did it splendidly, too! You ought to have seen him jump into the breakers, Submit. What little strength there is left in my poor old legs seemed to leave me then, when I knew you was in that boat—and I did know it, as if the Lord had told me."

Submit's eyes were dewy as she said, in a voice that made the common words thrilling:

"I know all you felt, father; for the nearness of death made me know fully how much I loved you and mother." She put her hand on his shoulder as she spoke, then softly touched the grizzled locks below his hat. It was evident from her face that she could not talk of her rescue yet—it was too thoroughly in possession of her heart. She had not

lived so long on the shore without being able to know the terrible risk Nicolson ran when he came after her.

After a little silence Seabury said:

"I saw Deacon Moss give you a letter. Is it from Florian?"

Nicolson, strangely sensitive concerning Submit, raised his eyes to her face, listening for her reply, and trying to read in her eyes something deeper than the lips said. That was simply "yes."

"He guessed pooty nigh when you'd be here," remarked Seabury. "He'll be on now, I s'pose. Haven't seen hide nor hair of him all the time you've been gone."

Nicolson thought there was an air of vexation in the way he stooped and picked a pebble, throwing it spitefully in among the hens, scattering them with loud cackling.

"He knew when I was to start, for uncle told him," said Submit. "About his coming—you can read his letter, and arrange it to suit yourself."

Seabury took the letter and walked towards the house, putting on his spectacles as he went.

"Your friend has the music of the South in his name," remarked Nicolson, having changed his resolve to go in the house, to one to stay as long as she remained.

"He *is* Southern; though you would not be safe to judge of people or names in that way," Submit replied.

"But you are certainly a Puritan."

"In name, yes."

"But you are almost in the shade of Plymouth Rock. That must have its influence—one's birthplace hangs a banner over one's life; we cannot forget it."

"Witness your emotion at sight of this heath," she said; then with uncalled-for earnestness, "One's birthplace is indeed different from any other spot, though only our baby eyes have seen it; therefore these souvenirs of the Pilgrims must have set an invisible seal upon my character."

Stooping to pat the tangled terrier that so besieged her skirts, Submit went slowly towards the house, and Nicolson leaned against the well-curb, ruminating with a stinging spice of self-scorn in his thoughts. It was that kind of feeling which men know when they are suddenly interested in a woman who is openly kind to them, and for whom they fancy some other has intentions likely to be successful. The surprise her appearance had excited in him—for she was entirely opposite

in face and manner to his preconceived idea of the daughter of Seabury—left his fancy unguarded, his sensibilities open to the deepest impression. He had only thought that she was one of those keen gray-eyed women of intelligence, but no ideality, that abound in the United States. He judged of the middle class, of the comfortable working people, as though he were in England, though his perceptions told him how erroneous that judgment was; but the habit of his life clung to him.

In the little low-browed porch, or "sink-room," he paused for a drink of water, and holding the cocoanut shell in his hand, the irritated tones of Seabury, who sat within the kitchen, came to his ears.

"D—n that Florian!" Seabury said, harshly, bringing the palm of his hand forcibly to the table. "No other man ever had such a plague of a nephew. What does the fellow mean by following Submit so? I won't have it! I'll put a stop to it!"

"You can't stop such things quite so easy," said his wife, anxiously. "He aint the man I'd choose for Submit, but he aint quite so bad as you think him, Silas; he's got some good in him."

"You women," said the husband, sneeringly, "can't see evil in a slim, handsome feller like Florian. Let his goodness keep him out of scrapes, if he's got any goodness, I say."

"I s'pose he'll come," said the wife, waiving the discussion.

"Come! of course he'll come! What does she think of him?" lowering his voice as he asked the question.

"I'm sure I never could decide," was the despondent reply. "I can't always read Submit. She aint our kind, exactly, Silas," she said, mournfully.

"I'd like to see a more dutiful darter, that's all," was the reply, somewhat belligerently.

Nicolson, absorbed in the interest he felt, forgot he was listening for the moment, then, as they went on talking about her, he silently left the porch, wandering down across the coarse-grassed fields to the beach.

He had not frittered away his heart in the ten thousand things which spoil a young man of society, and the girl he had just left was to him a presence he had never felt before—had imagined only vaguely. He did not love her; if he did not see her again, he would remember her as something that colored his dreams beautifully for a while, that left his soul purer for her influence. Now, as he lingered by the

shore, idly lounging on the sands, her face faded from his mind, and in its place—or rather it seemed as a continuation of thoughts of her—came pictures of the home he had left; but they were pictures dearer than their wont, with an indescribable charm, a flush of sunny hues upon them. At noon, when he returned, he did not think of Submit until he had started for the house, then her personality sprang into life again, and he wondered with a slight vindictive feeling concerning Florian, with whom the woman dealt so tenderly.

"A graceful scamp, doubtless," he said to himself, leisurely climbing the ridge of the beach, then turning to "scale" a stone over the rippling waves. Another stone whistled after his from some hand behind him, and a gay voice cried:

"You are born an athlete! No one ever beat me before."

Nicolson turned quietly, and encountered a brilliant face, whose smile glanced like the shining waters beyond him. A slight figure below the medium height, dressed in the extreme of fashion, a diamond glittering in the spotless linen, and upon the slender white hand; long, dark hair blown by the fresh breeze, all shaded by a Panama hat, which was deftly and carelessly lifted, while the owner bowed to his companion and said:

"I am sure I know you—the young Scotchman whom aunt mentioned as boarding here. I am happy to see you. We shall be fishing comrades, I predict."

Nicolson rather coldly touched the extended hand. It was not usual with him to fraternize quickly with any one, and he was peculiarly distrustful of this tropical looking bird, though he felt there was something very winning about him. He replied graciously enough:

"You have guessed who I am. I have become expert at that art myself, since my sojourn here. You are called Florian—whether as surname, I know not."

"Florian Hunt," with another bow, averting his eyes, as he said satirically, and yet with a question in his tones, "my wise relatives have not said my name with an accent of praise, I'll wager."

"It was mere accident that I heard your name at all, as an expected guest," replied Nicolson.

"I am glad my letter has preceded me," said Florian, walking on with nervous steps, twirling his cane rapidly. "I came down in

the morning train. Has Submit arrived? not yet, I suppose." His curious-colored eyes glanced rapidly over his companion's face, then off again, while his lips seemed to tremble with eagerness.

"Yes, she has arrived."

"Ah!" Florian's step grew quicker; then he turned back, saying apologetically, "That is a surprise I hardly looked for. I did not expect her until to-night at the earliest. Pardon me, I must make my greetings at the house;" and he sprang on, disappearing round a curve in the road.

Nicolson looked after him, then he turned back to the beach again, crunching the wet gravel with a decided heel. A sudden blow had come over the soft visions of an hour ago. He pushed off a boat and jumped into it. This staying so long on this shore would soon be wearisome. He must go to the great cities yet to be seen. Then why linger in this fishing hamlet? He rowed off, and made a pretence of fishing, until a salt air hunger forced him in shore. It was evidently past the dinner hour, for Submit and Florian were in the yard, sitting in the shade of lilacs. Florian's face was glowing undisguisedly as a child's; his yellowish black eyes were dilated, his lips crimson. Nicolson's clear-cut face showed very coldly beside the versatile fire and play of Florian's. When the latter saw Nicolson, he left Submit's side, and came to him, grasping his hand with warm pressure, exclaiming:

"Fortunate fellow! If I only could have had the happiness of doing Submit the service you rendered last night! They have been telling me about it. But I—I am never lucky." He spoke the last words with discontent, even with genuine sadness.

"Yes, I was fortunate," said Nicolson, unable to prevent a feeling of warm admiration, and a vague pity for he knew not what; for he felt for the first time an undertone of pathos in the character of the man before him—the vaguest sense of a helpless appeal for happiness. It was that, perhaps, which was one secret of Florian's power over women. He appealed to them; he besought them by some undefinable characteristic—never by words to drive a wretched existence from him, to exorcise the despondent moods that swayed him. And he was fascinating in person, always graceful, attentive, gallant; his dark, irregularly-featured face was capable of expressing a fire which fair heroines had only read about, and which they found dan-

gerously bewildering; for one of Florian's methods of killing time was to play upon girls' hearts, a pastime in which other men have indulged. But Florian could never coolly do that. He was attracted by a tone,

"Her look, her way
Of speaking gently—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and, certes,
brought

A sense of pleasant ease on such a day."

And he paid his court with such devotion, genuine, though ephemeral as flowers and as winning, until the charm was over, and he had flitted, leaving the woman, if perchance she was young and undisciplined, to awaken startled over an idol broken, a heart roused and forsaken. Such girls, with few exceptions, make bitter women. Florian had had his hour. Ask him not for repentance and amendment. But such a life left him dimly alone and unsatisfied.

His cousin, Submit Seabury, had been his companion two years ago for six consecutive months, and the wayward, winning Florian had cast his hopes upon her. "He should live or die as she said.

Curiously, he did not appear to have the same effect upon Submit as upon other women. She was cool, she did not yield to his extravagant advances, she did not melt at his entreaties, and consequently she unconsciously secured the deepest love he could know; she became the ruling power of his life. He loved her with a fierce impetuosity he did not try to disguise. Could a woman fail to be influenced by such a devotion?

In that first half-hour, Nicolson easily read Florian's heart and character, and judged him harshly as a man would. Possibly not more harshly than he deserved.

But Submit did not carry her heart upon her sleeve. He could not read her, but he admired her with a tinge of something that thrilled in his unsullied blood, while he watched furtively for the sign of her love for Florian. But her eyes maintained their calm, or only started into some special brilliancy at command of something sheerly intellectual.

"She is worth reading," Nicolson thought, that night, sitting in his room by the table which held his heath-blooms. "How delicately she thanked me. Yes, she is worth studying."

The young man slept upon what he thought a cool resolve to study human nature in the person of Submit Seabury.

Florian, in the next room, did not sleep so easily. He leaned out under the glimmer of the stars, his brow clouded, his eyes fiercely flashing.

"If this soft wind would cool my head!" he exclaimed. "There's a cursed heat and fury in it! I have sat too long with Nicolson and Submit in the same room. The man of ice! He does not know it now, but I know that he will love her—love her! And what then?"

He turned round, and paced softly up and down the room, his head thrown back, something in that handsome face and figure that remind one of a leopard, agile and graceful, not too trustworthy, in spite of a heart full of good impulses.

CHAPTER III.

It had been a summer of fearful heat, and hardly a shower had cooled the earth. The stillness of the air had settled upon the village. Men and women did their usual work, but did it in languor, with no energy to strengthen them. Older people talked of a summer years ago, when heat ruled, and no rain came for weeks and weeks. The crops grew parched and shrunk every day, sinking and shrivelling beneath that bronze sky ever glaring down upon them. There secured always that expectant hush in the air, as if earth and man were waiting for something that did not come—something they would soon die without. Sometimes on the air was the scent of burning bushes, gathered to clear the land. The scent hung over the village, mingling with the salt breeze, for the ocean was true to itself and the town, and gave a little dampness from its eternal waves.

It is at such times that country people shake their heads and say—"It will be a sickly season." And in truth, many sickened, just as the foliage and crops did. Submit wandered often into the woods that lay back of the village. There was a sense of dampness there; the shade kept the greenery of moss and underbrush fresher than anything anywhere else, and the air retained a refreshing smell of growing vegetation.

She walked slowly, pressing her feet against the soft moss, sitting down at last by a pine tree, her face turned toward the place whence the ocean wind blew. She was pallid and looked oppressed. Shadows were upon her eyes, and the smile which she bestowed on the terrier at her feet was hardly a smile,

so slow and lifeless was it. A weight of something more than the weather appeared upon her, or perhaps she, also, was ill.

A voice from a path in the woods was all at once heard singing some old-time, pathetic ballad of the sea and a wreck it had made. The shadow on Submit's face deepened; she passed her hand wearily over her eyes, then turned toward the direction in which that path led. She knew he would find her now, though the place had thus far been sacred to solitude and to her. A man appeared among the trees, slowly fanning his heated face with his broad hat. The woman, watching him, could not but see how haggard he looked, with what a jaded air he walked. But the weather was horrible enough to account for languor or pallor. His roaming, restless eyes saw the folds of her muslin dress against the green leaves. He came to her side, bent and took her hand, the action flushing his cheeks, and giving a better lustre to his eyes.

"Submit," he said, "we find the good when we seek it not. I have been looking for you ever since I returned, until now. I came back to see you again. I cannot leave you."

Florian sat down at Submit's feet and forcibly retained her hand. "You were cruel enough last week when I left, to allow me to touch your hand now," he said. "Is the Scotchman gone?"

"No."

There was a lurid darkening of his face, then it fitfully flashed. Submit thought him now like a torrid night, holding dreadful lightning and destruction. His constant presence, always calling for what she could not give, had sapped her, bodily and mentally. She was undefinably conscious of the fact that he drew life from her, that physically he oppressed and weakened her. And yet she liked him, was strongly interested in him. Now she was singularly out of patience, she felt in that passive state when one feels it is but a step from quietness to madness. The hot sky above her had stifled her. She could not bear anything.

"You should have staid in Philadelphia," she said, "you cannot have accomplished your business already."

"Don't talk to me in that way!" he cried, throwing her hand from him. "You kill me! I came back to plead once more with you. I am so abject that I can beg of you to marry me for pity only. I shall never be anything without you. I am going to hell as fast as I can."

She looked at him coldly. "And you wish to take me with you," she said. "I do not love you, save as a sincere friend might do. All my influence has been used to make you leave your weak ways of killing time. You have not reformed. You gamble, you drink, you are, I know not what. Florian, for the love of Heaven, let me respect you!"

Her voice had lost all its coldness, and was vibrating with an almost passionate entreaty, the sight of her seemed to madden him. He could not look at her and know that she could never be his. He attempted to seize her hands, exclaiming:

"Help me, then! Before God, I tell you, you are the only power who can save me from utter destruction. Promise to marry me—in five years—in ten years; let me have it to look forward to!" His eyes, imploring, burning, fearfully eager, besought hers.

"Florian, listen to me," she said with solemn earnestness, "and believe what I tell you. If I marry you without having anything but a strong friendly feeling for you, I should save you from nothing bad. I should be a curse to you—a curse beyond your imaginings. I should, being bound to you, learn to hate you, and myself as well. I am not too good," with a strong shudder, and a fiery flash of eyes. "Such a bond would be a chain forged by the infernal deities. If I did not love a husband, words have no power to describe the intensity of my dislike. Now, as my friend, I am sincerely attached to you. You are very winning, Florian, you are very attractive; I can easily imagine that girls should love you. But I—I cannot."

Her last words were uttered with a soft imploring in them, an entreaty for nobility and strength in him. She rose from her seat and said:

"Shall we not go home, now?" She extended her hand, lightly touching his head, her own face too sad for tears. He rose also, his wretched face becoming fixed in a look of unutterable misery.

"I think, if you will excuse me, I will take a stroll on the beach before I come up to the house."

His unnatural tone, his whole appearance alarmed her. She took a step toward him saying;

"You will take care of yourself, Florian? You are so impetuous, I am continually worried about you."

"Am I looking remarkably impetuous?" smiling ghastly upon her.

"No. I am not frightened about you. You look as if you might harm yourself. You will not?"

"I promise you," and not looking at her again, he disappeared behind the trees. Submit stood many minutes looking at the place where he had stood. Now that he was gone, she was weak and faint. She was near the edge of the woods, and puffs of sultry air came from the fields to her; that air seemed stifling and fatal to her. The red sunlight beyond the wood, pitiless and unobscured, was like a doom to her. A dreadful oppression was upon her, nameless, and from which she could not escape. A mantle of misery enveloped her. Her lips were feverish, her hands burning. She took her hat and went vaguely forward, deeper into the woods, conscious only of one wish—for rest, and peace, and coolness. "They say it is a deep and thick wood further in," she said; "there, surely, I shall find rest from this heat and drought."

The sun, deeply westering, glanced rarely between the rugged boles of the old pine trees. She would soon have a world of gloom to herself. If only it would grow cooler!

"Submit looks pale, lately," said Seabury to his wife.

"She's under the weather, like all of us, I s'pose," said Mrs. Seabury, with a worried look. "Where did she go this afternoon?"

"O, I don't know; down to the woods, I guess."

"She ought to be back by this time, she'll get a fever."

Seabury stood at the door, his hands behind him, looking off beneath the mild starlight to the long stretch of woods that lay in an unearthly stillness in the warm air. The atmosphere was full of a strong scent of burning wood, and to the right, several miles away, a bright and growing light shot into the sky, rising, dying, but wonderfully calm for such a spectacle, for there was no wind.

"The woods in the south district will all have to go, wont they?" asked the wife, gazing toward the light, remembering two other times when she had seen just such a glow in a sultry summer.

"Yes, and everything else, too, I should say," responded Seabury. "Squire Tilton was round there to-day. It only begun this morning, but he says it's awful. Unless there's rain, I don't see why the fire should stop as long's there's any stuff to burn. Thank the Lord, there's no wind!"

A tall figure came from the lilac tree where it had been standing. Nicolson's face was full of anxiety; his hand, clasped over a willow stick he had been peeling, was shut with a strain.

"Has Miss Seabury returned?" he asked.

"No; and I'm worried about her," spoke up Mrs. Seabury, quickly.

"She went to the woods, yonder?" pointing with his stick.

"Yes; but that is five hours ago, sure, and Submit is more than half sick."

"Where is Mr. Hunt?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

Nicolson thought he had seen him going toward the wood, but that would not deter him. As he walked down the path, he heard Seabury say:

"I shall harness up and ride over to the south to see how the fire looks, sir. Over the hill there it shoots up in tongues."

Nicolson looked off as the fisherman pointed. Scarlet flames leaped up, piercing the dark, hot atmosphere, and wreaths of beautiful smoke curled slowly in the glare, then the flame flickered low, leaving a lurid glow on the horizon. Nicolson reached the woods and plunged hurriedly in, thinking as he went of the stories the village people had told him of people lost in Duxbury woods. A horror of the night and time was upon him. It made no difference that he repeatedly told himself that it was not probable that Submit, who had lived here all her life, would allow herself to get lost in the woods. He would, at least, penetrate the darkness here. The low, throbbing heat of the night, the smoke, the faint, dry mist that half obscured the stars, enveloped his brain in a deep despondency, and burning through every other feeling, electrifying the languid life this weather gave him, was the love he felt for Submit. The days that had passed since she first came had made all clear to him. He loved her, and the whole resolve of his being, the mightiest purpose of his life, was to win her for the loving, regnant wife he had dreamed of since earliest youth. Hope and uncertainty possessed him. He could not yet utter words never to be recalled, never to be said again, until the impulse overmastered him, and he trembled at the power within him.

With head bent, and eyes dilated painfully, he pushed on between the branches, thinking how foolish and unsuccessful his search must be, but compelled to go on with it, for his

restlessness would not allow him to pause. More than a mile from the place where Submit had met Florian, Nicolson saw a handkerchief hanging silently on a branch of saffras bush. Its texture and delicate perfume made him sure it was Submit's. She had, then, wandered thus far. He hurried on with headlong speed, not knowing where he was going, and indeed it would not have mattered, for he had not the slightest clue that should lead him to take a special direction.

The sound of crackling wood grew more distinct; the report of falling trees had sounded like guns of doom ever since he had started. Now the air was sultrier, more suffocating, and filled with the strong exhalations of pine, that at a distance had been pleasant. He reached a slight elevation, and found to his surprise that, below him, instead of woods, lay a dry and parched field, over which a fire had run, leaving it blackened and smoking. The glare of the fire was plainer and plainer; the field lay sullen in the flickering, strong light, and every moment made objects more horribly distinct. At the right was the fire, not yet to the boundary of the field, but striding onward. He stood irresolute a moment, then dashed across the field in the direction of the fire.

"I cannot find her—I cannot rest," he said, trying to find comfort in the thought that she had gone to a neighbor's, or had already reached home. The fire was burning over a series of low hills, or more properly knolls, sweeping up their sides, seeming to devour the very earth itself. One of these hills, the first which had been burnt over, Nicolson climbed, and standing on the charred and heated ground, looked to the fire. That sight stirred him to an almost intoxicated excitement; the terrible heat made his blood boil, and the novelty of the moment gave him a factitious strength. Below him, further from the flames, which receded rapidly, so dry was the fuel, he saw a group of men from the villages about. They stood still, sometimes shading their faces with their hats, speaking but rarely, all garrulosity subdued by the power before them. In that moment many even of the most practical forgot that the fire was consuming hundreds of their dollars, forgot everything but the vivid grandeur of the scene. Nicolson saw Seabury in that red glare, his face toward the flames, staring with all his soul. Restlessly Nicolson's eyes roamed from one direction to another. He could not forget that he had not found

Submit, that he had started in search of her, and he could not shake off a foreboding of something evil, something he must strive to arrest. Yet, how? His face, even with that light upon it, looked pallid and strained from the emotion that made him suffer. He felt as if struggling in a dream which held him in a grasp of horror. The fearful beauty glowing up to heaven made no other impression on him at the moment than to intensify the maddening doubt and gloom of his soul. His reticent nature was roused to a pitch unknown to mercurial temperaments. Passion and fear for his beloved held possession of him. The feeling which had hitherto only shown itself in flashes to Submit now blazed with a force that overcame his will, strong as that was.

His eyes had left the fierce shining of the fire and had dwelt for the last five minutes vaguely upon a peninsular-like point of woods that ran out toward the field behind him, and on the other side of which in spring was a deep, swift brook rushing rapidly seaward. Tall, slender pines stood here in the direct line of the fire, and Nicolson's excited eyes dwelt there, until upon their strong vision grew into a partial distinctness the sight of a figure reclining against a fallen tree. After that first fancy, the fickleness of the flames put that place in gloom, and Nicolson dared not leave his position until he had seen again whether the thing were a fantasy of his imagination. Now a flame shot up with diabolical brilliance, and in the yellow glare of light Nicolson saw what he thought was a woman in light clothes, motionless against the log. Why did she not move? Did she not know death was tramping toward her, a death too dreadful? Was not that heat too great to be borne in that place? Was it not, in truth, some play of light upon birch bark? Nicolson could not stay to decide any question. He fled down the hill as if the demon of the fire pursued him. Over the blackened field which had been so lately burned that the ground scorched his feet as he sped on. The distance was greater than he had thought, seeing it by the light of the fire, and as he went on the heat increased, so that his panting breath hardly relieved his lungs, and the floating ashes half checked him.

"O my God!" he thought, "she must be dead, or she could not stay in such a place."

Struggling and stumbling on, he at last knelt exhausted by the tree where she sat. It was she, pallid, senseless, her dark hair

drifting over the log, her hand lying heavy and inanimate on the hot earth. An exclamation of love and despair passed his lips as he took her in his arms and felt how helpless she was. He staggered back, preferring to cross the stream, now so low that but a few inches of water ran in its course. A tongue of terrific light shot upward nearer them; it reached forward as if eager for the fleeing mortals. Its light made the pallor, the immobility of Submit's face still more visible to the man who carried her. He laid her down on the bank of the stream and filled his hat with water, bathing her head, dashing it upon her brow, a piercing joy in his heart as he saw a languid movement of the eyelids. He waited for nothing more; seizing her in his arms again, he hurried on, plunging through the briery fields across a marsh, out upon the still, quiet beach where an ebbing tide was rippling slowly out to sea. Here a faint wind refreshed him. He sat down on the sands, and Submit, in a hurried, weak way, withdrew herself from his embrace, drew her hand vaguely over her eyes and asked in a bewildered voice:

"Where did you find me?"

Raising her eyes to his face as she spoke, the glance she saw there drew her soul upward to meet it. She could not withdraw her eyes, and an unusual physical weakness made her lack self-control. More than all that, the time decreed in heaven had come when love should know its own. He did not appear to have heard her question, and she instantly forgot it. His eyes glowed with a purple fire on her, and his face, with features strangely still, was yet transfigured with an inward light that burned with pure intensity.

"I have been silent until I must speak," he said, leaning forward as if to take her hands, then restraining himself, and slightly withdrawing from her.

"Do you know what I would say to you?" a thrill of tenderness exceeding even the passion in his voice. "My entire being cannot have been so voiceless as not to tell you. I love you."

Her eyes, which were so marvellously beautiful and dear to him, as brown eyes only can be to some gray ones, were upon his with an expression he could not mistake. That deep, exquisite and faithful feeling of her soul was there. She loved him. He took her hand, holding it with a pressure that told more to the girl than any stormy demonstration could have done. The light of the burning

woods made his face plain to her. In it she read surely of a noble love, human with passion, divine with tenderness and truth.

They sat there for a while, uttering detached words, looking at each other in the radiance of a just confessed love. Then Nicolson saw a shade of some remembrance fall like a dusky veil over her face.

"You love the Yankee girl Submit?" she asked, some unuttered sadness in her tone.

"I love you, whoever you are," he answered; then said, "you cannot surely think I would hesitate one moment because you are not in the same grade in which society has placed me, that that has made a difference to me, has deterred me? I think you know me well, know a nature that could not soon speak of its strongest feeling."

She smiled to think how well she knew him, better even than he thought.

"No, I could not have loved a man whom I had seen hesitating out of regard to my station. Contempt would have smothered any affection."

Again she paused, as if unable to utter what she must say. She withdrew her hand from his and pressed it upon her heart. She turned her face away, not daring to meet his gaze. Then speaking slowly she said:

"My childish fancies and remembrances did not err when they told me later how you have been brought up in the beliefs, the hates and loves of your clan. I have imagined many times your face when I should tell you that I am a child of a clan whom the Nicolsons deem it a virtue to hate. My name is Jean McDonald of the clan of McDonalds against which you are sworn."

For us, whose growth is of to-day, whose feelings, happily, are not nurtured to perpetuate enmities, few of us can understand the emotion with which Nicolson listened to the girl beside him. For centuries it had been almost a religion of his family to hate the race to which this woman belonged. Deep rooted as his life, bound to the feeling by every consideration of his past, this sudden revelation sent out all hope from his soul. Torn by terrible feelings, his heart convulsed by this sudden revealing, he saw only one path before him, the path he was to walk alone. It seemed to him that honor itself called him away; his entire education could not so suddenly combat new ideas. Submit saw the struggle and the wrench of resolve. She sat dumbly, looking her fate in the face. She had hoped for nothing else, and yet she

loved him profoundly, with all the strength of her nature, which was always constant, while there was something of southern fire and intensity in the dark eyes that saw separation in the face of the man she loved.

With a sudden fierce gesture, a sudden up-flaming of strongly burning fires, Nicolson turned and clasped Submit's hands, pressing his quivering hot lips upon them, murmuring hurried words that she understood without distinctly hearing. Then after a moment he said, "Let me take you home, I cannot leave you here."

"I will remain," she said, feeling a return of the prostration that had attacked her in her wanderings in the woods.

"Go," she said. "The sea is my friend; I will stay here."

He had not the strength to stay; his eyes embraced her, his colorless face seemed unable to turn from hers, but the next moment he was gone, quickly tramping over the sands in the direction of the nearest railroad station. Submit saw his tall figure in the crimson glow of light; it hurried on and turned a curve in the beach.

A wild, white face upturned to the skies, deep eyes with unutterable grief in them, then Submit's head sank slowly and she said:

"After all, men cannot love as women do—though he loves me—loves me."

The last words were half inaudible, the stupor of the disease that had been upon her all day came again to her. She sank down, quiet and senseless, in the glare of the element that swept up the woods.

CHAPTER IV.

It was not until months after that they could speak to Submit of the time when the woods burned. Not on account of Nicolson, for his unexpected departure was of minor consequence in the eyes of the Seaburys and of the village. It is true they commented on it, and surmised that he had been rejected by Submit in favor of Florian Hunt.

"She loved Florian, I think," said Mrs. Seabury to her husband; "how can I ever tell her?"

"You may never have to tell her," was Seabury's reply as his face darkened with fear.

"You don't mean—" whispered his wife in a tremulous tone, her heart seeming to stand still as she listened.

"The doctor thinks it's a hard case, she's got the fever bad," said Seabury, vising and

walking softly up and down the room. "Don't worry about telling her anything."

Mrs. Seabury did not reply. She stole in softly to sit in the darkened room, faithfully, as if the child there had in verity been her own flesh and blood.

Later, when Submit was better and sat up a little in the old-fashioned armchair, having it always turned toward the sea, to Mrs. Seabury's surprise, the first question she asked was not of the two men who had gone, but of her own childhood.

"You said my mother left me with you before I was a year old," she said, looking up at the sky long ago cleared by sweet rains.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Seabury, who never cared to discuss that topic, always liking to think this proud girl was really her own, childless as she was.

"Tell me of it again, please," said Submit.

"There ain't much to tell. You know it all. Your mother came over from Scotland for the sea-voyage on account of her health. She wanted a quiet place, and one of my cousins in New York who saw her there sent her here. My own little baby had just died then, and she wanted me to nurse hers. I took you. Soon the doctors ordered her South. She had only two servants with her, for her husband was dead, and she had no relatives whom she liked to ask to travel with an invalid. I remember when she came here to bid you good-by that she said you were the last of that line of the McDonalds. She could not take you with her, her health was so poor. She said she should be back in a few months, and take you to Scotland with her. Not six months after, I saw her death in the paper; she died in Cuba. By that time I loved you as if you were my own little girl. I dreaded the time when one of the servants should come, but no one came. I learnt, almost to a certainty, that they were lost on a ship which was wrecked coming from Havana about that time. To quiet my conscience, I advertised, but not widely, I was so fearful. I have been afraid I've kept you from property in Scotland. It's haunted me like a sin, but I couldn't help it."

Submit hardly noticed the sadness of her foster-mother's voice.

"I should like to go to Scotland," she said.

Nothing more was said on the subject. Submit grew gradually better. The clear, soft, and yet crisp days that sometimes come in the last of autumn were now shedding their smiles of balm on the sea-side town.

Submit began to walk slowly up and down the beach with her mother to support her steps. Suddenly she asked:

"Where is Florian? You do not speak of him."

Mrs. Seabury looked frightened. "We did not think you were strong enough," she began, hesitatingly. "It is dreadful; I can hardly tell you. You remember the fire?"

Submit's shudder replied for her.

"Poor Florian, he must have got lost in the woods—"

"Tell me!" cried Submit, "is he dead?"

Her companion bent her head. "The men found him the next day. They knew it must be he, the fire had suffocated without burning him much."

A bond of iron loosened from Submit's heart with the copious tears that came. At last she said:

"I can go home alone, mother; you need not wait." And Mrs. Seabury left her, she thought, to mourn over her dead lover. But it was rather to be thankful for his death, horrible though it had been. Submit walked to a point of rocks and sat down, drawing her shawl close about her, for the sun could not thoroughly warm the winds of November.

A subtle hope of gladness was in her heart, why, she knew not, for a happy love was shut from her. The sinking sun colored the fleeces through which it sank, and they doubled themselves upon the clear water. Invigoration and strength were in the air and scene, and a slight color came to Submit's thin cheeks.

"O, let this be a sign of peace," she thought, extending her clasped hands towards sky and sea. But it was not peace she felt. It was a tumult of pulses, a hurrying of red blood, a thrilling of some unaccountable emotion. The glory in the west deepened to intenser colors, and still she sat there, moved by some power she could not recognize, for was not he whom she loved forever parted from her?

A figure sprang over the rocks, stooped beside her, devoured her with glances at once powerful and soft.

"I could not stay," whispered Nicolson, sitting down by her and drawing her to him. "Love and holy nature are stronger than feuds and traditions. I claim what God has given me, and know that I am right."

"Our path opens in light," softly said Submit, pointing toward that stream of sunshine. And with such a chiasm of love descending on them, it is well to leave them.

THE STRUGGLE FOR MAVERICK.

A Dramatic Story....In Three Parts.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

III.

THE two men sat facing each other without speech or motion for full five minutes after those four terrible words were uttered. I have somewhere seen a picture representing Satan claiming a lost soul; and something like the diabolic look of triumph on the face of the arch fiend in that picture must have been, I think, that of Augustus Maverick as he sat and watched the effect of his revelation. Alvin Roesselle was at first almost stunned. Dreading, at first, when Maverick introduced the subject of Levin's death, that he had in some way discovered something that might compromise him in the affair, he had throughout the interview, to this point, succeeded in repressing the worst of his agitation by the thought, "He cannot know the truth; he may suspect me, or wish to frighten me; but it is absolutely impossible that he has done more than to guess." So he reassured himself until the disclosure of Maverick's knowledge, in all its frightful completeness, came with its crushing weight. For an instant he was completely overpowered. Men's intellects do unquestionably wander sometimes for a single instant, under the pressure of some grievous burden; and Alvin Roesselle, stricken into mental blindness for a moment by those terrible words, "you are the man," sat looking in vacant bewilderment at the sinister face before him, struggling to grasp a knowledge of whose face it was, and why it was there at all. His eyes wandered around the room, looking at its familiar objects; but none of them seemed familiar to him. Maverick saw that he was well-nigh stupefied, and becoming alarmed for his condition, was looking for water to dash into his face, when the occurrence of a very simple little incident brought back his senses. Mrs. Roesselle was waiting tea when the two men entered the house, and had been patiently waiting since; but as the minutes went by and her husband did not appear, she naturally thought that he had found his business longer than he had anticipated, and likely to last some time longer; and so she rang her

little bell as an intimation to her husband to bring his visitor out to tea. Disenthralled by the sound, as it reached them faintly in the study, Roesselle started to his feet, pressed his hands to his face, and was back again in the world of consciousness, face to face with the horrors of his position. In one moment he reviewed the past and contemplated the present. His boyhood—his college-life—his theological studies—his ordination—his settlement in this parish, and his labors here—his courtship, his marriage, and his happy home—the hideous, uninvited recollection of the death of Horace Levin, as Maverick had just truthfully stated it, with all its circumstances—he thought of all this, and then of punishment, degradation, loss of everything to Helen and himself that was dearer than life; and then he fell back in the chair, groaning aloud.

"O God, help me! O God, help me!"

There was a light tap at the study door; it was slightly unclosed, and the gentle voice of his wife said:

"Wont you come out to tea with your friend, Alvin?"

With a strong effort, he gulped down his sobs and groans, and answered:

"No, Helen, don't wait."

The door was closed again, and Mrs. Roesselle returned disappointed to the solitary table in the dining-room.

In the agony of mind that now pressed upon Alvin Roesselle, he took no thought, at first, of the probable object of Maverick in making this communication to him, and in this way. The tumult of woe and despair possessed him, to the exclusion of all thought beyond his immediate condition; and turning from his visitor he paced the floor, sobbing and weeping like a child in the distraction of grief. Maverick watched him, coolly and without emotion, waiting until his first frenzy had passed before he spoke at all.

"Well," he at last said, "was I not right in insisting that you had an interest in this business?"

He was answered by a groan of anguish.

"And what do you say now about my laying this rather remarkable story before a magistrate?"

"Don't mock me—don't torture me!" the clergyman cried. "Man, devil, whatever you are, have pity on my woe, and do not sit there mocking me. If you wanted to see me swung to a gallows, why did you tell me at all of this, which I thought was known only to me and my God?"

"It's not quite as bad as you are making it," Maverick dryly remarked. "You haven't murdered any one, parson; if I used that ugly word a few minutes ago I used it in haste, and cheerfully take it back. There was no malice about this killing; it was not premeditated; it was done in a heat, on considerable provocation; it's clearly not a hanging business. Not at all justifiable, of course, for parsons have no more right than worse men to get so insanely angry as to push men off precipices; but it's no worse than a degree of manslaughter. I don't doubt that twenty years in the penitentiary will satisfy the law."

"Merciful God!" Alvin Roesselle covered his face, and the tears trickled through his fingers. And still his tormentor sat unmoved, calmly surveying him, and intent on a design that had its birth very soon after the discovery which he had related.

The clergyman sat down again, and wiped the tears from his eyes. The violence of his distress was spent; he sat now with haggard, hopeless face, like one who desperately waits to know the worst.

"God knows I did not mean to harm him," he said. "I hardly knew him at all; I had no enmity with him; and I was never so astonished as I was on that night when he came out from those bushes and laid his hand on my rein. 'You are Mr. Roesselle?' he said; and, without waiting for a word of answer, he led my horse to the bush, and tied him. 'Now get off, sir,' he said, 'and account to me for what you have done.' I did get off; but it was only because I had recognized him by this time, and thought he was out of his head, and I meant to get my horse loose, and leave him at once, to save trouble—for I saw something bad in his eye. But my feet had not touched the ground when he had me by the collar; and as I scuffled to get loose, we broke through the bushes, and came out where you saw us, near the edge of the bank. I shook him off, and listened to his abuse for a while without saying a word;

and what I did say was mild, and could not have irritated him more."

Maverick nodded assent to this.

"Why didn't I leave him—why did I dare to trust myself with him for a moment, when I saw what a temper he was in? I meant to soothe him, if I could; I was waiting for a chance to explain to him that he was cruelly wronging me, and that I had not by intentional word, or thought, or act, done him any injury—when he struck me. I hardly know what happened next. You say I pitched him over; I must have done it, for that unlucky blow filled me with the spirit of hell, and made me forget my Christian training, my ministry, and everything except that devilish desire to have blow for blow. I know that I sprang for him—and then there is a kind of a confusion, and I only recovered myself as I crouched, giddy and weak, at the edge of the cliff, watching with horrible fascination his body as it fell through the air."

The unhappy man covered his face and bowed it on the table, as if to shut out the apparition that his words conjured up before him.

"I never meant to kill him," he said, a moment later. "I never meant to strike him; I was not myself at that mad moment, or I never should have touched him. And O Heaven, how his face has haunted me ever since! The secret that I thought lay between me and my Maker was hard enough to bear; I have had to mask my misery and go abroad among my parishioners and administer consolation, when none needed it as I did. I have risen in the night while my dear wife slept, and groaned and prayed, and wrestled with my sin; I have asked for peace, even if it must be the peace of the grave; and still its dead weight hangs to me and blights my life. But now that the world is to know it—now—"

He could not finish the sentence, and Maverick took up the words.

"There is not the least doubt, Mr. Roesselle, that you have committed a crime of which my evidence would convict you, and imprison you for a term of years for it. If I go on and lay my complaint before the magistrate, this will be the *certain* result. Nothing could save you but suicide. Now I deliberately ask you the question—shall I make this complaint?"

The clergyman looked at his interrogator and tried hard to read in his stern, selfish

face some trace of pity for himself—for his wife. But there was no softening of those hard muscles; there was absolutely nothing in the whole face from which he could derive the least hope.

A door closed inside; Mrs. Roesselle had tired of waiting for her husband, and was at that moment ascending the stairs to their chamber. He thought of her, and he was again overpowered.

"If you have tormented me enough, you may leave me," he sobbed. "There is no pity in your face; there is none in your heart. Leave me, and I will try to make my peace with God. May he temper the wind to my poor lamb when she cannot lean on me."

He bowed his head, and sat with it bowed, silently pouring out his soul in prayer for strength and mercy. When at last he raised his eyes, he thought to find himself alone; but Maverick still sat where he had last seen him.

"Will you not leave me?" he asked.

"You do not yet understand the object with which I sought you," was the reply. "I came not only to acquaint you with your perilous position, but to show you how to escape from it. I have satisfied you that you are standing upon the brink of a precipice more perilous than that over which you cast poor Levin. I offer you my hand, to lead you to safety. Will you accept it?"

Roesselle looked doubtfully, distrustfully, at him.

"What do you propose?" he asked.

The eyes of Augustus Maverick brightened at the question. To him, wrapped in his own selfishness, the honor or degradation of this man and his young wife was nothing; the punishment of a criminal, or his escape, was nothing; and had no plan of his own come into combination with the knowledge he had obtained of the manner of Horace Levin's death, Alvin Roesselle might have lived and died untroubled by aught but his own conscience about the story of that one black night. But through all the cunning of his tale, and the art with which he had practised upon the fears of the poor victim about whom his snares were winding, he had brought him to the eager inquiry for the way of escape; and just at that point the interest of the plotter begun. He motioned the other to bend his head; he bent his own until the two nearly touched; and then, not daring to speak the words aloud which he wished to utter, he whispered them in his ear. He

whispered thus for some minutes, restraining the words of warm remonstrance that the other wished to utter, and whispering on until the whole nefarious design was explained.

"Man, man," cried the listener, starting back with horror, "do you ask me, a minister of God, to commit this shocking sin?"

"I ask you to do a certain act, easy to be performed, of no consequence to yourself or any other in whom you have any interest."

"My holy office teaches me to have an interest in all, the humblest of God's people."

"Stuff!" impatiently exclaimed Maverick. "Will you do what I wish?"

"I cannot."

"You can."

"I dare not."

Maverick rose again.

"Either that, or disgrace and the penitentiary."

"Have pity on me!" Roesselle entreated, clasping his hands, and sinking on one knee before his persecutor. "Have mercy, as you will one day ask for mercy."

He might as well have prayed to the walls of the room. Augustus Maverick took out his watch and said:

"Decide in ten minutes."

The house was quiet at that hour; the domestic was asleep over the kitchen, and Helen Roesselle, little dreaming of her husband's agony and peril, slept in her chamber. There were none to hear the groans of mortal pain that burst from the heart of the unhappy man; there were none to hear the frantic supplications for pity which were poured forth in that study to that inexorable man who stood with his watch in his hand, repeating the words, "decide—your time is nearly up." And there were none but He who sometimes for his mysterious purposes permits the wicked to triumph, to know the enforced surrender of principle, the enforced yielding to sin, that occurred that night within that study.

It was well towards midnight when Augustus Maverick, more triumphant in this victory than he would have been in winning the hand of Augusta Traynor, left the parsonage. He mounted his horse and rode directly home. Rousing the hostler who slept in one of the barn chambers, he bade him take his horse, and also inquired:

"Has Mr. Oliver come in?"

The man sleepily shook his head.

"Good!" Augustus muttered. "Let him

stay away a few hours more, and I'll lay a train that will end in blowing him out of Maverick." And he passed into the house.

Closing the door of the parsonage behind his ominous visitor, Mr. Roesselle took the lamp from the study and ascended to his chamber. His wife was quietly sleeping; but the flaring of the light disquieted her slumber, and she stirred uneasily, and murmured in her sleep. He bent down to catch the whispered words, and plainly heard his own name.

He started back from her innocent presence; he left the room; he left the house; and casting himself down upon the grass, wet with the dews of the night as it was, he sobbed forth despairingly the words, "My crime—my crime!"

The gloomy hours of the long night passed away; a thunder-storm arose, and the lonely wife awoke, and shuddered at the storm, wondering at the absence of her husband; and still Alvin Roesselle lay upon the ground, careless of the discomfort of his situation. A storm was raging within his brain, and again and again, until daylight warned him that this dreadful night was ended, did he exclaim, "My crime! my crime! my crime!"

IV.

ROGER BRILL was a loquacious man of about sixty years, fat and good-natured, and had always been indisposed to hard labor during his whole life. He had no kin that he knew anything about, and having never contracted the matrimonial alliance, he had no one to support but himself. It was well that this was so, since the slender salary allowed to him as sexton of the parish church and general grave-digger for the neighborhood was barely sufficient to feed him and keep him in tobacco and beer. As for clothes, he had worn the same suit of rusty black for many years, and nobody ever supposed that he would purchase any more. He came of a race of sextons, beginning with his great-grandfather, who held the position in old colonial times, when this parish church was first built; and it had duly descended through his grandfather and his father to himself. He had filled it for thirty years, and the little old shed of a house, near the church, in which he lived, solitary and alone, was a resort for the old gossips of the neighborhood of both sexes.

The chief pleasure of Roger's existence, next to beer and pipe, was to know more of what was going on than any one else; and he was generally able to rehearse more of the current news than any one else.

It was upon another summer evening, ten years from that on which occurred the scenes of the last two chapters, that Roger sat upon a bench in front of his humble habitation, smoking a long clay pipe and chatting with one of his neighbors, a crippled gardener who sometimes worked at Maverick House. They talked of the events of the neighborhood; and as what they said concerns some of those whose fortunes we have undertaken to follow, we will listen to their talk.

"And you buried one more to-day?" old Toby Small observed.

"Yes," responded the sexton; "and a proper fine man he was. We shan't see his equal very soon in this parish, I'm afraid. He was a clever, pious man, was Parson Roesselle, and allus had a kind word for a poor body—ay, and sometimes a gift. And he's the first grown man I've buried since old Ezra Maverick went to his last account."

"Who preached the parson's funeral?"

"I dunno his name; but it was the same man married him. He came up from York."

"What ailed the parson, Roger?"

The sexton always disliked to acknowledge that he could not answer a question; and after some coughing and smoking he said:

"Consumption, I reckon. I understand the doctor gives out that he don't know exactly what it was—a kind of puzzling disease; but them doctors don't know what's the matter quite as often as they think they do. I think it was consumption," and Roger oracularly slapped his leg. "Haven't we seen him going about among us, hollow-cheeked, hollow-eyed, and as hollow-chested as an old man, for these ten years, never complaining, but getting himself into the grave as fast as he could by hard work? Such a man for doing good I never see. I've known him to get up in the middle of a cold winter's night and ride two miles to comfort a poor sick crone. If a man ever deserved heaven, it's my opinion that he did. And I say he died of consumption, and hard work, and exposure."

"Likely," grunted Toby. "Seemed allus melancholy-like."

"Yes, I take it that was part of his duty as a minister."

"Wonder where the widow'll go?" Roger speculated, after a moment's silence.

"I know where somebody'd like her to go," Toby observed.

"Where?"

The gardener jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards Maverick Farm.

"Mr. Augustus would like her."

"Not to marry?" the sexton inquired, suspending his smoking.

"No—not he. He'll never marry; all broke down; don't think he's long to live, anyway. But to keep house. I know he wants some one; and she's a likely one now."

Roger grunted assent.

"Mr. Augustus has all the old man left, I s'pose?"

"Every copper. I used to think Oliver the favorite; but the old man never had anything to do with him after he married that girl down the river. Nobody pretends to know why it was; but he lost everything when he got her. Some queer things about them Mavericks, Roger."

"Awful queer."

The conversation here came to a halt; and the two sat in silence as darkness came down, and pursued their speculations severally. A gruff voice from before them suddenly startled them, and they saw the indistinct figure of a tall man in a cloak standing near.

"Is the sexton here?" the voice gruffly demanded.

"Here, sir, at your service," replied Roger.

"I want to look into the church. Get me the key." A more ungracious voice the sexton had not heard during the whole course of his employment.

"Wait a bit and I'll go with you, sir," he said, hustling about for his lantern and key.

"I don't want your company," the voice harshly replied. "Get me the key without any more fussing."

"Who is it?" the sexton whispered, to Toby.

"Don't you know?" the gardener whispered back. "It's Mr. Augustus Maverick."

"Bless my soul, so it is!" Roger exclaimed, aloud. "Beg your pardon, Mr. Maverick, for not—"

An ejaculation that sounded much like a curse interrupted the sexton.

"I'm not Mr. Maverick," said the man; "and I only want the key to get an umbrella that I left in the church to-day."

He snatched the key from Roger's hand, and strode off through the darkness.

"Did he say he wasn't Mr. Maverick?" Toby asked.

"Yes," answered Roger, somewhat bewildered.

"Well, I say *he was*. I can't be mistaken about his voice; he's cursed me too often in that same way for me to forget how it sounds."

"This *is* queer!" the sexton said. "If it is Mr. Maverick, I've nothing to say agin his going into the church, though I don't think he was ever seen there yet; but if it aint—and he says it aint—I ought to know who it is, Toby, you stay here; I've got to look into this."

The sexton took his hat and stick, and struck off for the church. The evening was quite dark, and as he approached the old edifice he could only distinguish it as a darker spot in the prevailing obscurity. He felt his way carefully up the steps and into the porch, and softly tried the door. To his surprise he found it still fastened, as he had fastened it after the funeral that afternoon.

But he took instant thought, that if the man who had borrowed the key had entered the church, the door must be locked on the inside.

A small stained-glass window opened into the body of the church to the left of the great door; and as he stood wondering what this could mean, and conjecturing that the man had probably not entered the church at all, as yet, he became aware, by means of the effect upon the glass of this window, of a flash of light within the church.

It was not a bright, or a broad flash, but a faint one, coming and disappearing in a breath; no longer than the flame of a single match would cause.

He continued to watch. Again and again, and yet again, those faint illuminations just tinged the glass of the window, coming at regular intervals of about half a minute, and disappearing as quickly as they came. The stained glass was impervious to sight, and there was no way that he could discover what was going on within the church without entering it.

He waited a few moments, in sore perplexity, while the flashes came and went with almost regular precision.

"I'm bound to know what all this means," Roger muttered. "I'll count these lights; and if there be ten more of them, I'll hammer on the door till he opens it; and then I'll find out about it."

He turned his attention fixedly to the window, and counted the next flash at once:

"One—two," he muttered, "three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine!—"

It was the last. With the ninth feeble illumination the church faded into darkness for the night; and Roger conferred with himself as to what would probably happen next.

"If he comes out now," he thought, "I'll stand here and face him. That'll frighten him into telling what he's been up to in there."

The man did come out at once, and with very little warning. Roger had not thought that the heavy carpeting of the aisle would completely disguise the footfalls; and the intimation he had of the approach of the prowler was the rattling of the key in the lock of the door. Poor Roger's courage suddenly forsook him upon the emergency, and he hastened to conceal himself behind a high-backed bench which stood in the porch.

The door swung open, and the man in the cloak came out. He closed the door, turned the key, put it in his pocket, and then turning around, held up a small dark lantern, and closed the slide. He had no umbrella anywhere with him. As he held up the lantern, its light fell across his face, and Roger distinctly saw the features and recognized them. It was Augustus Maverick, without doubt.

He replaced the lantern beneath his cloak, descended the steps, and again disappeared from sight. The sexton emerged from his concealment and made all the haste that he was capable of back to his house; and there he found Toby still sitting on the bench.

"Did he come back?" Roger eagerly asked.

"Sartin," responded the gardener. "He came and left the key; here it is. I asked him if he found his 'brella, and he mumbled something, I couldn't tell what. Haven't you seen him?"

"There's some devilry in this, Toby Small," Roger deliberately said. "I'm going back to the church, and I want you to come along. I'm going to know all about this before I go to bed."

But Roger Brill promised himself more than he could perform. He lighted his own lantern, and with Toby went to the church and searched carefully through it. Nothing in the least suspicious was disclosed by the investigation; nothing had been taken, and nothing left. Everything was in its usual order; and Roger Brill was puzzled.

"Well, I'm blessed if I ever!" he ejaculated. "Toby, what do you think?"

"I think he came to look for an umbrill,

and didn't find it. I guess we'd better say nothing about it."

And yet, unsuspected by these simple souls, this nocturnal visit to the parish church was for an object of mysterious significance. It was to assure the visitor by the evidence of his own senses that Alvin Roesselle, this day buried, had been faithful to the pledge which he mercilessly forced from his lips ten years before. And Augustus Maverick returned to his mansion with the assurance of his senses that the minister had been faithful.

PART SECOND—I.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

THE lapse of ten years more in the progress of events brings us to the year 1850; and we resume the thread of our narrative at the cottage on the Hudson where we once found Augusta Traynor and her lovers.

The cottage has somewhat run to waste; the paint in many places has worn off, the lattice is broken here and there, and the beautiful lawn is overgrown with weeds and tall, rank grass. Signs of neglect are everywhere apparent; and the scanty furnishing of the cottage within gives token of poverty as well. We shall not find Augusta Maverick here now; but if we should visit a little graveyard near by we should have no difficulty in finding a headstone bearing the letters:

AUGUSTA MAVERICK,
Wife of Oliver Maverick,
Died January 7, 1844,
Aged 43 years.

We are revisiting the cottage on a morning of early May, and the sweet violet-breath of spring blows pleasantly through the windows. By a casement overlooking the Hudson a young girl is seated, gazing thoughtfully out upon the prospect. An entry made in a family record which she holds upon her lap tells us that her name is Laura Maverick, and that she is now in her nineteenth year.

We turn from her simple, unornamented dress, from the books she holds upon her lap, to look at her face and head. It is such a face and such a head as could not fail to arrest attention at once, because both are unusual and full of unusual marks of character. The dark brown hair shows for itself that it has never known the confinement of a comb; it flows in wild freedom, in heavy, glossy masses down upon the shoulders, and the motion of head and hand that tosses it

back has become habitual. The broad brow and the whole face are fair; but the features are those of Augusta Maverick; one glance would show you that. It is a beautiful face; but beautiful with a cold, classic beauty; and here again it is the face of her mother. But there is that in it which you never could have found in her mother's face. It has all the cold, haughty attractiveness of her mother's; but if you look from the firm setting of the lips up to the eyes you will see such eyes as are not often seen in human creatures. They are not black, nor blue, nor gray; you might say that in different lights they are all of those colors; but they are neither. They are as colorless under their heavy brown eyebrows as water; but they are always bright, translucent, mysterious. A man who did not love this woman, a man who had never been enthralled by her dangerous presence, would say that those eyes showed far more than should be seen in any woman; not alone firmness, but a hard, indomitable will; it might be, a cruel purpose, if occasion served, which she could easily mask with a softer, more winning look.

Her eyes turned from the river to a book that lay open in her lap on the family record. It was an old book, with quaint, strong binding, antique type, and paper turning yellow with age; and its expressions were couched in obsolete forms. She had found it that morning in one of her mother's trunks; and one of the fly-leaves bore the words, "Presented to Richard Traynor (her deceased grandfather) by John Derry, captain of his vessel *Swallow*." The title-page showed that it was published in London, in 1679; and it bore the name, "A Compound of Curious Fact for Curious Bodies to Ponder."

As the eye of Laura Maverick glanced carelessly through its pages, her attention had been arrested by a short paragraph which she had read, and to which she now returned. It read as follows:

"About poisons, however, what we do know is little enough as compared with what we know not. Thus, who would think that the deadliest of them all doth grow and flourish in our very gardens, in simple herbs and flowers, harmless of themselves, but of mortal power when mingled. An English traveller in Syria, a century ago, discovered this secret; and those who wish may find it now put down at page 104 herein."

The reader hastily referred to the page, and there read the names of four common garden

plants, every one of which she could see in the little plat beneath the window.

"But it is most marvellous," the book continued, "with how little trouble death may be caused by this means. Thus, take three leaves of each, wrap them tight in a cloth so that they may have no air, and leave them to sweat together. In three hours the cloth will be so drenched with the poisonous property, that death follows the pressing of it to the nostrils."

She read the words again, very carefully, and then turned down the leaf and put the book carefully away. She had just seated herself in her chair by the window when she heard a heavy step on the veranda, and a man entered the room.

"The post brings two letters this morning, Laura," he said; "one for each of us." He tossed a white envelop bearing a wax seal into her lap. "I have read mine; it is of immense importance to both of us. Read yours, if you choose; and then I wish to talk with you about mine."

The speaker, who was Oliver Maverick, threw himself down in a low easy chair and leaning his elbow upon his knee he fixed his eyes on the carpet and waited for his daughter to read her letter. Laura glanced at the well-known superscription; *her color changed, and she hastily placed the letter in her pocket.*

"I will come back in five minutes," she said to her father, who merely nodded; and she left the room.

Back of the house, at the edge of her flower-bed, there was a large stone which was a favorite seat; and here she sat as she read her letter. More than once during its reading her color came and went; more than once a strange flood of light poured into her eyes, and her lips came firmer together and her face grew harder; and after the first hasty perusal she threw down the sheet and put her handkerchief to her eyes. She tried successfully to restrain the whole violence of her emotion; but she must have been less than a woman to have suppressed her tears.

"I might have written differently," she thought. "But how could I tell that he was as proud and impatient as this? And he informs me that his offer is withdrawn—that I am as free from him as though we had never met. How can I punish him? How can I make him feel my resentment?"

The wounded pride of the woman spoke in these last exclamations—in her tone much more expressively than in her words. She

snatched the letter from the ground, and read it again. It was dated at New York the previous day; it began simply, "Miss Laura Maverick;" it was signed "Roscoe Grayle," and read as follows:

"The receipt of your letter to-day makes it necessary for me to write to you once more; only once. I find you have chosen to think my meaning and my purpose very different from what my first letter plainly expressed. Let us very briefly recall our acquaintance, and all that has passed between us. We met upon the occasion of my graduation, and your conduct showed an interest in me. That I admired you was natural enough; the whole college did. We met several times afterwards in the city, and I came to love you; or I fancied I did. You encouraged me, and did it by conduct and expression which were not at all equivocal. Upon the strength of this conduct and these expressions, I wrote to you shortly after your return to your home, frankly disclosing my feelings, and asking you to be my wife—some day. I wrote as plainly as words could say it that I was poor, and had my own way to make in the world; and I asked for your love to strengthen me for my struggle with the world. I waited eagerly for your answer, hoping that you could feel as I did, and bid me go on and hope.

"Well—you know what kind of a letter you gave me. I do not blame you for being what you are; I do not reproach you for saying what you have; but I do tell you candidly that since I cannot have your unconditional love, I withdraw my offer, and make you as free from me as though we had never met. Laura Maverick!—am I doing you a wrong when I say that your long, carefully-phrased letter means, in brief, just this? 'I will not bind myself to any man now; I must be the mistress of wealth. I don't deny that you are not disagreeable to me; work away, and when you have money enough, come back and ask me again. Somebody's gold must wed me; I rather hope it may be yours; but time will show.'

"You may be startled to have the mirror held up to you in this way; but your secret heart will confess the truth of the picture it shows you. But as for me, I peremptorily decline the position in which you seek to place me. Nature never made me a dangler or a time-server; I will run no races for hearts where gilding and not love must win. I tell you my mind plainly; it is better so. Let this be the last that shall pass between

us. I leave the city to-morrow for a short visit to my aunt up the river. We shall probably not meet; if we do, let us say nothing to revive the past. In all kindness, farewell!"

Again, in a passion of disappointment, did the girl cast the letter to the earth; and now she ground it down with her heel. Frank and manly as it was, it touched her keenly, showing her to herself in an aspect that angered her the more because of its perfect truth. In ten minutes she had exhibited to herself the antipodes of her own impetuous, selfish, sinister self. "He insults me," she thought; and then her anger and vexation gave way to an admiring remembrance of the handsome and talented collegian, and regret that she had written so politic a letter as she had. And then, fighting out to its end almost the same conflict that her mother had fought here twenty years before, she took up the letter, tore it into minute shreds, and let them float off one by one on the wind.

"He is gone," she thought; "and I can well afford to let him go. He was only a passing incident in my life; he must go some day; better now. There shall be no more trouble about him."

It was only a thought; but her eyes spoke it, and her lips spoke it without utterance. She turned to the flower-bed, and stooping to it, selected a handful of green leaves here and there, and laid them in the palm of her hand.

"So harmless separately," she thought; "and yet so deadly when covered up together for a little time. I wonder who has used this subtle, terrible agent, and how many of all the people who have died in their beds, leaving no mark or trace of death's cause, have died from this!"

Suddenly scattering the leaves away, she returned to the house. Her father sat where she had left him; but a light doze had overtaken him, and the letter which he had received had fallen to the floor. The girl took it in her hand and looked at the address, which was written in a rough, sprawling hand, and at the Tarrytown postmark, bearing the date of the previous day. While she stood with the envelop in her hand her father awoke with a start. The twenty years that had elapsed had not made an old man in years of Oliver Maverick—far from it; but the emaciation, the wrinkles, the gray hair of age were all there. His face was sown all over with the footmarks of a searing

disappointment that had entered into his life and blasted its best promise. It had been, twenty years before, a hard, unlovely face; it was so now, and tenfold more so by the addition of these canker-marks, and the sullen expression of misanthropy which had habitually settled there. But upon this morning there was something new and unusual in that face; it had brightened a little, and there was something in the dull eye that had a hopeful look, if it could not be called hope. His voice, too, was stronger and firmer than was its wont; and by these signs his daughter knew that something of unusual nature had occurred.

"Is that my letter?" he asked.

"Yes, father."

"Have you read it?"

"No; I just came in, and picked it up from the floor where you dropped it."

"Read it, then, for I wish to talk with you about it."

II.

LAURA MAVERICK took the letter from the envelop and read it. Purged of its many errors in grammar and orthography, it would have read thus:

"Maverick House, May 20.

"MR. OLIVER:—Things are getting worse with your brother every day. He took to his bed since my last, and has not left it. The Tarrytown doctor says he never will. I heard Mrs. Roesselle yesterday ask leave of him to send for a city doctor; but your brother only shook his head, and said, 'No use.' Four days ago he had a stroke of something pretty bad. They tried to keep it from the servants; but it would get around. I was going through the entry, and I overheard the doctor say something to Mrs. Roesselle about *numb* or *dumb palsy*, which I judge is apt to do the business up quick.

"Excepting the sickness, there has been nothing unusual going on here. David Terry manages the farm, and Mrs. Roesselle has control in-doors; and I reckon they carry on the place to good advantage. Should think there was money saved every year.

"About that thing you were so particular I should watch for—you may rest easy about it yet. I know it has not been done. No lawyer has been to the house; I could not help knowing it if there had been. I keep good watch. Send me ten dollars.

"Spry."

"P. S. He is apt to go off sudden, I think. If he gets worse all of a sudden, I will telegraph you. If you do not hear from me again for a few days, you may depend he is sinking slowly. I shall not write again for a fortnight, unless he betters. Mrs. Roesselle is sharp-eyed, and I have to watch my chances to write."

Laura laid down the letter, and looked inquiringly at her father. The latter was sitting upright, eagerly waiting for her to finish it. He began immediately, as soon as she looked up.

"Before giving you any explanation of that letter, my daughter," he said, "I wish to recall to your mind some facts which are interesting to us which you do know, and to inform you of others which you do not know. And first—you know too well that we are, and have been as long as you can remember, cursed with poverty."

Oliver Maverick spoke bitterly; and the bitterness reflected in his daughter's face was a sufficient assent. She did know it, she had felt it; and she had returned to her poor home from each visit to the city, among a few of her mother's humbler friends, with grief and heart-burning because of the lot that fettered her to this place. Naturally gay, brilliant, vivacious, with her mother's ambition for social triumph, this same poverty had denied to her her mother's accomplishments; and she realized full keenly that all the conquests she could hope to make must be made by the power of her own beauty, and grace, and tact, unaided by anything from artificial help. And Oliver Maverick, too, loving his bright, imperious child as even such men love their own flesh and blood, had felt keenly, bitterly, the necessity that entailed this poverty upon her.

"You know, my daughter, from hearing me say it, that the present master of Maverick House is my younger brother. You have never been to that house; I presume you have never spoken to Augustus Maverick, and perhaps you don't know him by sight."

"I have seen him once only," Laura interposed. "It was the year before mother died, and while she was able to walk out. We were standing by the gate one pleasant day in the fall, and a man rode by on horseback. I saw she turned pale, and I asked her what was the matter. 'I do believe that is Augustus Maverick,' she said. I looked at him, and as he went past he looked at us and

scowled. I have not seen him since, that I know of."

A moody look settled upon the father's face as he continued:

"I have not seen him for three years; I have not spoken with him for twenty. We have been completely estranged; but while he has dwelt all that time on the estate of the Mavericks, in ease and plenty, I have lived here like an outcast, pinched with poverty, and almost heart-broken at my bad fortune. I wish to tell you briefly why this has been so.

"The Maverick estate has borne that name since the time, or almost the time, that the English conquered the colony. The lands were patented by the king to Colonel Maverick, and he built the mansion upon them. By regular descent this estate came down to my father, Ezra Maverick, who inherited it as the oldest son of his father, under the law of primogeniture, then prevailing here as in England. Augustus and myself were the only children, and I am some years the elder. Our mother died while we were quite young. Before I had attained my majority, the law I have spoken of was abolished; but that made no difference with my father's feelings or intentions. He liked all the laws and usages of the mother country; and I have often heard him speak of this one in particular, and declare that it was right that the oldest son should take the estate, and that he should conform himself to it, though it was abolished. He stated his design distinctly to both of us, and informed us both that he had executed a will, devising the whole to me.

"Knowing this, I looked forward to the ownership of the estate as a matter of surety. I thought the title was fixed in me, and that nothing short of my decease before my father, could possibly defeat it. And I had supposed that my brother, knowing the positiveness of our father's convictions upon this subject, would submit to what seemed inevitable with patience, if not cheerfulness. I do not remember that we ever had any conversation about it; we certainly had no hard words. I knew what my father's wishes were as to him; and if I had received the estate I should have made an allowance to Augustus out of the yearly profits. I supposed he understood this, and had no fears of any subterfuge on his part, until I found myself actually disinherited.

"The cause of my difficulty with him was my marriage with your mother; or rather,

the success of my suit, and the failure of his."

Listening to every word that her father uttered, Laura rose and crossed the room. Thus far, she had heard little that was new to her; and leaning upon the casing of the open doorway she looked across the fields to the little cemetery that held the mortal part of her mother, and where she could almost distinguish the stone that covered her remains. Dying while Laura was as yet but little more than a child, the strong, passionate heart of the grieved and disappointed woman had moved her to tell the girl, unknown to her husband, of the bitter blighting of her hopes and plans in life, and of the wealth which she had coveted for her daughter as much as herself, denied to her by the crafty scheming of a disappointed suitor. For years had Laura known the bitter truth, and the wretched knowledge had added fuel to the flame of her desire for wealth. Yet one more remembrance came to her as she stood there in the doorway, listening to her father's story; the recollection of how she watched beside her mother, dying of a broken heart and a disappointed ambition, on that stormy winter night when she died. Her father had gone to bring the doctor, and she was left alone with the dying; before the morning she was alone with the dead. The mind of Augusta Maverick wandered as the end drew near; in death she seemed to grasp what had slipped her possession in life; she seemed to think that she stood with her daughter upon the back porch at the Maverick House, and was exhibiting to her the beauty of the estate.

"See, Laura dear," she said, pointing with her almost transparent hand to the blank wall of her bedroom, "see the fields and woods, the hills and dales, and all the buildings there are. It is all ours; it is your father's patrimony, and so of course it is ours. It is worth thousands upon thousands of dollars; I don't know how much. Now come in, dear, and let us look at the parlors. There'll be rare times here this winter, Laura; we'll have parties, and brilliant ones, I promise you; and mother's old friends shall come up from New York to see how grand and happy mother is, and how proud of her daughter and her great house. For it's all ours, Laura; houses, and lands, and—and—"

They were the last words she ever spoke; she passed away a few moments after. Maverick, which should have been hers—hers and Laura's—was the theme of her farewell

words to the girl; and the lesson of the scene sunk deep in the impressionable mind of the latter. She had never forgotten it—she could never forget it; and when her father came to talk, a few moments later, of schemes to make *Maverick* their own, he had in *Laura* an eager and sympathetic listener, and one ready to enter upon the endeavor with enthusiastic energy, and a cunning far deeper than his own.

"Are you listening, *Laura*?" he asked.

"Yes, father;" and she resumed her seat.

"It is enough to say about the circumstances attending the marriage," he resumed, "that both *Augustus* and myself were suitors of your mother. She accepted me; and from that moment he entertained the bitterest, most revengeful hatred against both of us. He threatened me on yonder veranda, when he discovered that he was rejected, with pecuniary ruin, and hinted that he could and would make me an exile forever from *Maverick*; but the very extravagance of the threat, coupled with the furious rage that possessed him at the moment, caused me to wholly disregard his talk as idle raving. How little I knew him, and the depth of his revengeful spirit! I passed that night at an inn near by, and did not return to *Maverick* until the next afternoon; and I was instantly impressed with the coolness of my father's manner towards me. His last illness had just set in; and though he lived for eighteen months after that, he was absent most of the time. He never, after that day, addressed me; his replies were always short and surly; and he never would take my arm when he felt well enough to walk across the floor, or out into the garden, in fine weather. I felt that some evil influence was at work against me, and of course I knew what it was; but I waited, trusting to time to make it right, and never dreaming that I was being completely undermined. I very rarely saw *Augustus* about the house, or elsewhere; he would not and did not sit at the same table with me, and never spoke to me. One of the house-servants told me that he held long interviews with my father at night; and I suppose that the mischief was done while I slept. Your mother and I were secretly married, for I feared that the knowledge of such a step on my part, either proposed or accomplished, might tend to compromise me with my father. *Augustus* was much away from home at that time; nobody pretended to know much about his goings and comings, or where he passed

his time. My father died; and then the blow fell. I was not prepared for such sweeping, calamitous villainy as was then disclosed. A new will had been made, declaring in the most express terms that the first had been destroyed, and the new will, without the slightest mention of me, gave the whole property, real and personal, to *Augustus*! It was genuine, beyond a doubt; the witnesses were good and trustworthy men, and proved its proper execution by their oaths. If there had been any ground upon which to contest it, I should have done so, though I had been compelled to labor by the day to obtain money to enable me to do so. But there was not the slightest ground of opposition, and after the funeral *Augustus* took possession. With an incredible malignity, which I can neither forget nor forgive—never, God help me, never!—he ordered me to leave the house in two days. I went immediately; broken down and dejected, I came here, and have never since crossed the threshold of *Maverick*. My poor earnings in a small clerkship during six months of the year have scantily supported us; your poor mother married a beggar, instead of a man who could raise her to the social position for which she was born."

The feelings of *Oliver Maverick* were overwrought by his narrative; he was compelled to pause and choke down his rising emotion.

"And what could that man have said or done, to cause you to be disinherited?" *Laura* warmly cried, while her bosom heaved and her eyes burned with anger.

"I do not know, even to this day! We shall never know; the breast of *Augustus* holds the secret of that astounding influence, and we may never look to have it revealed. Some infamous, horrible falsehood, coined with devilish ingenuity, must have filled the old man's ears, and he was too old and weak to detect the lie or the object of it. In fact I care not much to know the means by which I was ruined; my brother was revengeful and satanic enough to accomplish it; it would not profit us to know how it was effected, if we could."

"So much for the past," said *Laura*, whose mind was already speculating with the probabilities of the future. "What next?"

During his melancholy narrative, *Oliver Maverick* had settled down to a crouching position in his chair, and sat with listless, folded hands and drooping head. But with his daughter's question he raised himself up,

his eye brightened, and his voice took a firmer tone:

"Ah, the future, the future!" he exclaimed. "The glorious future shall right our wrongs; we shall have reparation; yes, we shall have all that fraud and hatred wrested from us! Are you with me, Laura? Do you feel as I feel? Does your spirit burn like mine with the bitter sense of our wrongs?—and will you join me in a bold, timely effort to right them?"

She came and stood by his chair, and smoothing back the thin gray hair from his wrinkled forehead, she said:

"I feel as you feel—I chafe as you chafe under this dreadful wrong. Tell me what is to be done, my father, and with hands or brain I will work night and day."

"I knew it!" the other joyfully cried. "I've been plotting for months, and my plan is all made; but I wanted to depend on your spirit and will, for we may need all of it to help us through. And I firmly believe that with ordinary luck, all will be as we wish."

The speaker paused a moment to collect his thoughts, and continued:

"The letter which you read was written by Jerry Small, the son of the old gardener at Maverick. He was a boy at the time of my father's death, and he became much attached to me for something I did once for him, I forget what. I have paid him some money now and then when I could spare it—and sometimes, I fear, when I could not—and from him I have had minute and faithful reports of what has transpired at the mansion. Not a person could put foot in the house, but I have known it, and as much of that person's business as could be known by any of the servants. Little as I have seen my brother since he turned me away from his house, I have known all that transpired within it that has been worth noticing at all, and all that has been heard at home of what he has done abroad, and where he has been. All that my informant could know by actual sight or hearing, or pick up from the other servants about the house, I know; and all this has gone on without a suspicion being raised at Maverick of what Jerry was about. For twenty years I have waited and watched for an opportunity; and the letter received to-day indicates that my time draws rapidly nigh. Augustus has led a notorious dissolute life for years; so frequent and extravagant have been his excesses that I had expected his death long before now. If I have been

wrecked by grief and disappointment, he has been ruined by systematic debauchery. The letter speaks the truth; to-morrow may see his end.

"I know what persons are around Augustus now. Besides the house and farm servants, few of whom ever communicate with him, and none of whom can or would attempt to influence him, there is David Terry, the farm manager, a prudent, thrifty Scotchman, who minds his own business, like all of his countrymen; Mrs. Roesselle the housekeeper, whom I do not know, but who, as Jerry informs me, is a quiet, unobtrusive woman, who has never recovered from the grief occasioned by the death of her husband, ten years ago, and, I suppose, has nothing to do with Augustus, now that he is confined to his bed; Granny Wadhams, as she is called, the old hired nurse; and Anna May, the housekeeper's adopted daughter, who is about your own age, and who assists Mrs. Roesselle. I am not afraid that any of these persons have become familiar with Augustus Maverick, who is, indeed, a man of no familiarities at all; nor am I in the least afraid that any of them have any design on his property.

"You will perceive where these words lead me. We have designs on the property; we are the only relatives of its owner; assured of one thing, we might quietly wait for the tidings of Augustus's death, and take possession as his heirs."

"And that assurance is," eagerly broke in Laura, swiftly reaching the conclusion, "that he has not made and will not make a will."

"Precisely. It is to that contingency that the ambiguous part of Jerry's letter refers; and I am morally certain, for the reasons that the fellow states, that up to this time no will has been executed. The present condition of Augustus is decidedly favorable to us; he lies weak and helpless with palsy, almost at the point of death. If I am right, there is no one near him to suggest a will; and there is no one in existence to whom he would care to leave his property. Thus you see that all seems well. But we have not the assurance that we want. Were it any other man than Augustus Maverick, the chances would be that the approach of death would extinguish the hateful malignity that he feels towards us; but with him the chances are that it will last as long as he lasts; and I know that if he rallies enough to gain strength of mind for the purpose, he will think of a will—and then his malignity will live after him. Now

what is our way to make sure that he dies intestate?—as the lawyers would say.”

“If we had ever been received at the house, so that we could go there now—” Laura began; and her father hastily broke in:

“Since we have not been there, we must go now! I have thought carefully of the matter; and I plainly realize that the way of audacity is the way of safety. We must be at Maverick when Augustus dies; we must be there before he dies. Who is there to say us nay, or shut the door against us? Mrs. Roesselle? She is a housekeeper, paid for her services, like any servant; we are the only brother and niece of the dying man, and she will not dare to refuse us. What if we have not been recognized by Augustus as his relatives? She knows that we are such; and to a Christian woman like her that fact would be an additional reason for our admittance. In fact, I have not the slightest fear of any opposition in that quarter. Do you think Augustus will order us away? He will be too far gone to know or care who is in the house; and we will keep out of his sight and hearing. There is no one else there who can by any possibility be troublesome; and once we are in the house we will play our game carefully, shrewdly—with the help of Jerry Small, remember—and *successfully*, I hope and believe. Now, Laura what do you think of my plan?”

The girl enthusiastically clapped her hands, and her face glowed with anticipation.

“Excellent, father—excellent! ‘*L’audace, l’audace—toujours l’audace!*’ We shall be certain to succeed. I will be with you; I will help you; you can depend on me for all that a woman can do in this business. We have nine chances out of ten in our favor; and I long to be at work now. When shall we make the venture?”

“I am more in doubt about that than anything else,” was the reply. “I cannot expect to hear from Jerry again for some days; and knowing as I should by his silence that Augustus is getting worse, I should be in constant fear that he might go off suddenly, with the mischief done. On the other hand, I fear to take the risk of venturing to Maverick without further information, lest we find the object of our solicitude (with the faintest tone of bitterness in the sneer) so far from the grave as to defeat our purpose immediately and forever. Advise me, Laura; what do you think?”

“It may be—”

A double knock interrupted her, and going to the door, an envelop was placed in her hands.

“A telegraphic message,” she said, closing the door.

“Read it—quick!—read it!” her father whispered, weak with agitation.

Laura tore open the envelop, and running her eye over its contents, read aloud the words:

“*He is dying. May live through the night.*”

THE STRUGGLE FOR MAVERICK.

A Dramatic Story....In Three Parts.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

PART SECOND.—XI.

THE day that followed the death of Augustus Maverick, and the night of that day, cast the gloom of death over the household, and all that were of it looked and acted as though the solemnity of the occasion received all their thoughts. So it ever is in the presence of this mysterious, dreadful visitor. He may have taken one who was little or nothing in our affections, and whose decease would of itself cast no cloud upon our hearts; but nevertheless it is the voice of *Death* that has called to us from the silent land, and we pause and step aside from our daily plans and avocations, and give all our attention to the event. So it was at Maverick. The man who had died there was beloved by none, and there were none to weep for him; but all paid respectful deference to the fact that he lay dead in the house, and all the hopes and fears, the doubts and the anxieties which in the minds of those at Maverick were connected with this event were silenced now; and for a brief time the mansion was given up to the silent, solemn presence of death. That day and the night that followed it passed, and another day, till the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon, when the funeral was to be held. The dead master of Maverick lay in his coffin in the front parlor; and seated near it, during almost every hour of the days that it was in the house, were Oliver Maverick and his daughter, conspicuous to all who came to look upon the face of the dead. Their own faces were marked with a degree of sorrow quite unexpected to those who knew the long and bitter estrangement between the brothers; and it was also remarked that the young lady was dressed in deep mourning. The portmanteau that came with them to Maverick had been carefully packed, and, as it seemed, provision made for the event that had now occurred. And under this ban of silence and solemnity the preparations for the funeral were made, the operations of the household were carried on, and its members, or some of them, met at the table, where hardly a glance revealed the emotions that would struggle in their

breasts. Mrs. Roesselle had put aside, with such an effort as only such a woman as she is capable of, her own strong feelings, and quietly took charge of the preparations for the funeral. And so carefully had the words and actions of this household been governed for the past few days, that not one of the servants, saving perhaps Toby Small, had gained any inkling of the meaning of many things that seemed strange to the servants. The gardener was quite old now, and almost superannuated; but all his life had been passed at Maverick, and he had been accustomed to observe what passed there. He had seen and known of many strange things occurring at the mansion, more than he had even hinted to his old crony, Roger Brill; and he had never reported anything to anybody until Mrs. Roesselle came to take the housekeeper's place. The old man had an unflinching loyalty to this woman; in his eyes she was the best and kindest lady that ever lived; and thenceforth he was as scrupulous in telling her of things that he thought strange or remarkable, as he had been before careful in withholding such information from everybody.

At three o'clock on the day of the funeral the parlors were filled with the people who came to attend it. There were some friends of Mrs. Roesselle, and some of the old families of the neighborhood, who came out of respect for the old family that they supposed before coming had given its last representative to the great estate. It was a neighborhood much given to concerning itself with other people's affairs, and the landed gentry and their families had speculated much during the last days of Augustus Maverick as to what disposition would be made of his property. The estrangement between the brothers was well known, and it was generally supposed that the estate would be given to some stranger; but when they were ushered into the parlors at Maverick on the day of the funeral, and saw the brother and niece sitting near the coffin, with all the aspect and manner of chief mourners, their opinions changed at once, and they concluded

that Oliver Maverick must have received some positive assurance from his brother that his inheritance would not be interfered with. As a consequence, the living Mavericks received many deferential bows, which had before been given to the dead Maverick.

There were no services at the church; Augustus Maverick had never attended worship there, and the good sense of Mrs. Roesselle forbade the inconsistency. She had brought herself after a severe struggle to face Oliver Maverick the morning after the scene at the deathbed, and ask him what particular arrangements he desired to have made for the funeral; but he had begged her to take charge of it, and do what she thought proper.

"I am grievously disturbed, my good Mrs. Roesselle," he said, with a corner of his handkerchief to his eye, and an artificial quaver in his voice. "I do not think my brother recognized me; he left no word, no forgiveness for me. Did he not mention my name in any way during the last day of his life?"

The housekeeper gave him an abrupt "no," and left him, indignant at the exhibition of such hypocrisy. "He might as well throw off the mask now," she thought. "He knows that I understand him; he has no further object to deceive me."

The funeral services were conducted by a clergyman from the city; the same who had performed the marriage and funeral ceremonies of Alvin Roesselle, and who was often invited to officiate among the old families of this region. The resident clergyman assisted. Both knew the character of the deceased, and they wisely refrained from any attempt to smooth over its vices and defects, and to give it any meretricious gloss. They knew as well as those about them that this man had been hard, selfish and sinister, and that his life had been far from a virtuous one; they knew that he had benefited no one by it, and that the community would in fact be better for his death. And therefore what was said over his corpse was put in the form of a lesson to the living, not an eulogium upon the dead.

The coffin was borne out to the hearse; a long procession followed it on foot, for the family tomb was close by. The services there were soon over, and the throng slowly dispersed. The dead was buried; the living could return again to their struggles.

But the clergyman from the city was a

guest at the mansion, and he remained there until the following morning. His presence barred the meeting between Oliver Maverick and Mrs. Roesselle, to arrive at an express understanding as to the matters upon which they had been silent since the death of Augustus. It was a meeting that the housekeeper dreaded. He was prepared for it, and she was not. And both of them, in these different frames of mind, labored under constraint until the clergyman had gone on the following morning, and felt a species of relief when he was out of the house.

They had both accompanied him to the door, and when the carriage that was to convey him to the boat drove away, Oliver Maverick said abruptly:

"I wish to talk with you, Mrs. Roesselle. Will you step into the parlor with me?"

The words and the manner in which they were spoken were trifles, but they plainly intimated the assertion of this man to the mastery of the estate.

"In a few moments, sir," the housekeeper calmly replied. "I have something which demands my immediate attention."

He looked at the hall clock.

"The subject that I wished to speak to you about is also one demanding immediate attention," he said. "It is now ten o'clock; shall I see you at half past ten in the parlor?"

"Say eleven," she said. He contracted his brows into a slight frown, but bowed as she passed into her sitting-room. He immediately rejoined his daughter up stairs.

Anna May was accustomed to go into this sitting-room at pleasure, and she had been there at this time for an hour. A few moments before the housekeeper and Oliver Maverick conducted the clergyman to the door Mr. Grayle had sent word to Anna that he would be pleased to see her; and she had directed the servant to conduct him to this room. When Mrs. Roesselle entered it she discovered them seated by a window, earnestly talking together. The gentleman rose as she appeared, and Anna exclaimed:

"We were wanting to see you so much, mother; there is something we want to talk with you about."

"In a little while," the housekeeper replied, and motioned to Mr. Grayle to resume his seat. "In a very little while," she repeated, absently. "I want to think, now." She sat down near the door, and became for a while unconscious of their presence. They glanced

furtively toward her as they talked, and continued their conversation in whispers.

In a moment more she rose abruptly, and laid her hand on the door-knob. "I shall be gone but a moment," she explained, as she saw that their eyes followed her. "Please remain here; I want to see you both."

She left the room and hurried up the stairs, through the hall, and to the suite of rooms. They had been locked ever since the body of Augustus Maverick was confined and borne out from them; and until that time, from the moment when he breathed his last in the midst of the alarm that his outcry had occasioned, she had not left the dead-room for a moment. "I wish I had kept them locked all the time," was her bitter thought as she successively opened the doors. "I might have known they would steal it; I was not careful enough. I don't see how it happened; there was dreadful wickedness some way about it; but it did happen, and I know I might have prevented it by greater caution." She sighed and threw open the door of the dead-room. Its air was heavy and disagreeable, for it had not been ventilated, and she threw up the window. Everything remained exactly as it had been left by her upon the morning of the removal of the body. The bed was still disarranged, as when the body of Augustus Maverick, living and dead, had lain on it; she had not permitted any one to make it up. She locked the door behind her, and dragged the bed-clothing in a heap on the floor. She tore off the case from each of the pillows, and searched them eagerly with eyes and hands; she ripped open the pillows at the ends, and explored their contents. Her search was fruitless. Not satisfied, she threw both feather-bed and mattress from the cords, felt under the ticking through the former, and then moved the bedstead back and looked over the carpet where it had stood. And still her anxious search was barren.

She sighed deeply, and threw herself down upon the disordered heap that she had raised in the centre of the room. There was no hope here. The bare possibility that the dying struggles of Augustus Maverick might have forced the envelop into some involuntary concealment about the bed had occurred to her as she sat below, and she had acted immediately upon the ray of hope it afforded, and had in that hope, faint as it was, come up here to search. There was not even a ray of hope left now. The will had undoubt-

edly been stolen; her wily adversaries were triumphant!

She was alone; she was in no danger of discovery or surprise; and overcome by her misery and her weakness she gave herself up to unrestrained grief. She groaned with anguish; she wept, and tried not to check the flow of her tears; she even prayed in frantic, intemperate supplications, imploring Heaven that the great wrong that was impending might not be permitted. She had found Anna May a beggar, and the triumph of Oliver Maverick must send her forth a beggar again; she had worked and waited with heroic and undaunted courage, through long and weary years, for the day when she could say to Anna, her darling protege:

"It is all yours, now, it is yours by right, as the only child of Augustus Maverick. Yet it might never have come to you but for me; remember it, my dear, so that you may always love me as I have loved you." Instead of that day, another had come; the black, bitter day when she must say to her darling: "We must leave our dear old home forever, and go out into the world; I know not where. Though you are the daughter and the only child of the man who owned all this, yet the law does not recognize you, the law will deny it to you. I cannot say it; I cannot give it up to them; I cannot leave this place, and bid her leave it with me," were her woful cries, repeated over and over again. "Pity me, Father, and help me to see my way."

The life of this woman, from the moment of her marriage, had been given over to sorrow, and darkness, and mystery; the misery of others had been laid upon her shoulders like a heavy cross, and she had bravely borne it through years of silent suffering; she was no stranger to sorrow, and she had had learned in the school of experience to bear its common visitations with equanimity; but this sorrow that racked her as she writhed upon the floor there in that deserted dead-chamber was deeper, more grievous, more penetrating than all.

She grew calmer when the first violence of her distress had passed, and remembering that the moments were passing, and that two separate interviews awaited her below, she arose and arranged her disordered hair and dress, and bathed her face. Her hand was placed upon the door-knob, when she paused a moment for a last thought. Was there really no hope? Was there—*was there* no way to avoid this dreadful extremity? And

suddenly, like a revelation, the thought of Mr. Jenks flashed upon her.

Sometimes, in our very direst extremities, a happy thought comes to relieve us, like the welcome flash from the lighthouse upon the fog-bound mariner on a dangerous coast; and such a thought had come to the relief of Mrs. Roesselle. There was strength and assurance in it, and she eagerly received its suggestion. The revulsion from despair to confident hope was so sudden that tears came to her eyes again; and then a hopeful smile irradiated her still handsome face as she dried them, and resolving to go to the village at once, as soon as she could release herself from her engagements, she passed rapidly into the hall again, and down the stairs.

The parlor door was open, and Oliver Maverick stood within it. "The clock struck eleven some minutes ago, madam," he said, with an air of assumed severity; and he awaited her approach with a frown wrinkling his face.

Before the thought had occurred to her which a moment since had filled her with sanguine hope, Mrs. Roesselle would have allowed the remark and the arrogance of manner that attended it to pass her unchallenged; now, flushed with new strength, this unnecessary and insolent reminder that she was tardy in fulfilling her appointment with the new master of Maverick irritated her beyond control.

"Sir!" she said, indignantly, stepping outside the parlor.

"I have been waiting for you," he said. "I repeat, the clock struck eleven some minutes since."

"And if you will listen, sir, you will hear it strike twelve in about forty minutes," she rejoined. The words were trivial and hasty, and she regretted them at once, because she was not used to speak in this way. Oliver Maverick's withered cheeks colored at the retort, and his voice trembled with anger as he asked abruptly:

"What do you mean?"

Perfectly composed again, the lady replied: "I meant to intimate that impatience on your part is quite as wrong as tardiness on mine; but I spoke hastily, and was not courteous in my reply. For that, I trust Mr. Maverick will pardon me."

He mumbled something unintelligible, and stood waiting to close the door after she had entered.

"I must beg your indulgence a very little longer, sir," she said. "I have been unable to finish what I had to do when you spoke to me; but I shall not be detained much longer. I am sorry; but it is unavoidable. I will be at your service in ten minutes."

She left him standing in the doorway, almost shaking with rage. The importance to be attached to the ownership of Maverick, and the deference to be paid to the owner, had become fully impressed upon the mind of this man; and he had arisen that morning with the idea prominent of making himself understood to the household, and of peremptorily asserting his authority. His first essay was with the housekeeper, and he now felt as though he had not obtained a large recognition of his authority.

"Damn her insolence!" he muttered, staring at the door through which she had passed and closed again. "Damn her insolence! She's had her way here so long that she thinks she's to have it forever; but I'll get that notion out of her head when I get sight of her again. She can have time enough to pack up and get what's owing to her, and then she and that little impostor that she put up so cleverly to ruin me shall travel. They shall have no more chance for that kind of thing, I promise them!"

He seated himself again, and in mingled anger and impatience awaited the return of Mrs. Roesselle.

XII.

As she entered the sitting-room Roscoe Grayle placed a chair for her near where he and Anna were sitting.

"I wanted to say something to you about what occurred the night that Mr. Maverick died," he said. "I do not *know* what object you had in keeping those people away from his bedside—although I have my suspicions; and I do not *know* why they were so anxious to be there, against your wishes—though I have my suspicions about that, too. But—"

Mrs. Roesselle interrupted him.

"It need be no secret from you, Roscoe, nor from Anna; I want you both to know. They are the legal heirs of the deceased; they knew he was almost certain to make a will before his death that would cut them both off. That will was made, and it did cut them off; though I cannot think that either of them absolutely knew the fact, or the contents of the will. They were bent upon

getting into that chamber before his death, finding the will, and destroying it. This they expected would put them right again, as the only heirs of Augustus Maverick, and this explains the presence of Laura Maverick in his chamber as we found her there. I do not doubt that she abstracted the will and carried it away with her; and I do not doubt that it was immediately destroyed. It is not to be found, and this is the only presumption."

Anna listened intently; Mr. Grayle nodded.

"That is exactly what I suspected, from what I have seen," he said. "But how was it that we were thrown into such a stupor that she could pass through the room without the knowledge of any of us, and into the sick-room, without the knowledge of the nurse, who sat close by the bed?"

"Have you no suspicion about that, too?" asked the housekeeper.

"Not only a suspicion," the young man instantly replied, "but a certainty that we were all drugged. I know it, because from my feelings when I was aroused by that terrible cry that awoke us all. I knew that a certain preparation of opium had been administered to me. I have some knowledge of drugs, and I have prepared it myself many times; and once I experimented upon myself with it to ascertain what were its effects. I found them to be precisely as we have experienced them. The drug was slow in taking effect, as I have no doubt it was with us, though I do not know when it was administered to us. I was plunged into a very deep sleep, which lasted for about an hour, when a loud shout by another person whom I had previously instructed, instantly awakened me. After what you have told me, I have no doubt that these people possess the secret of compounding this drug—which, by the way, is obtained only from old and rare books, not in general use—and that they administered it to all of us some time before Mr. Maverick's death. But how did they administer it?—what chance did they have?"

Mrs. Roesselle looked thoughtful, and passed her hand over her face.

"I comprehended that it must be as you have said," she answered; "but I have thought little about it since it happened; my mind has been absorbed with other things. We were drugged, certainly; and I know of no chance that they had except by putting it into our tea. But they could not do that without some of the servants being privy to it; and since I dismissed Jerry Small I do

not think there is one left who could be bought or tempted in any way to such baseness against me."

"Still," Anna interposed, "I believe it was done then; for, if you will recollect, Mr. Maverick did not come down, and Laura did not drink any tea."

They looked doubtfully at each other. In the light of the facts that Anna recalled, Mrs. Roesselle began to fear that more treachery had been developed among the servants; and before she could say anything more, there was a tapping at the door. Anna opened it, and the housekeeper heard her ask:

"What is it, Ellen?"

"Let me come in, miss, please," was the answer, and one of the kitchen-girls entered. She was much agitated, and only recovered the use of her voice when Mrs. Roesselle kindly said:

"Sit down and get your breath, Ellen, and then you can tell us what the trouble is."

The girl placed in her mistress's hand a rudely folded paper, upon which was scrawled with a pencil, "To Miss Rosie." The lady unfolded it and cast her eyes over its contents. Her attention was instantly fixed upon it, and she read it through with repeated exclamations of surprise and pain.

"Ellen, where did you get this?" she asked.

"We found it pinned to Jane Shorey's pillow," the girl replied. "Nobody around the house has seen anything of Jane since the night Mr. Maverick died; and when we tried to get into her room we found it locked. We thought we wouldn't say anything about it for a day or two, if you didn't notice her being away, as I suppose you would at any other time. We thought she'd be back yesterday; but she didn't come, and this morning old Toby said he'd break the lock and see what was the matter, and then we might speak to you. This letter was all we found; and we're afraid Jane has gone off and killed herself."

"There is no reason to think that, Ellen," said Mrs. Roesselle. "She has left us, and has taken a strange way of going. You may tell the servants so."

The girl curtsied and retired; and the housekeeper handed the poor outcast's letter to Mr. Grayle. He read it and then Anna read it; and the three sat in silence for a moment.

"It is all explained now," said the house-

keeper. "Poor girl! I pity her, though she has done us a dreadful injury. I wish she had spoken to me before her fright overcame her."

Now for the first time did Mrs. Roesselle understand the desperation of those against whom she contended; and she wished at the same time that she might have understood it better before she allowed the conspirators to occupy the outer room. But regrets were vain, and she was too stout-hearted to give way to them. Her mind quickly returned to the relief that the thought of the lawyer had brought her, and she rose to leave the room, for time pressed; and time at this critical juncture might be of the highest importance.

"There is much about this strange business that I wish to say to both of you," she said; "but it can be better said to-night or to-morrow. You will remember, Roscoe, that I asked you, when you came, to remain here until Mr. Maverick died, as a favor to me."

Mr. Grayle bowed.

"I am not ready yet for you to go. I wish you to stay at least until to-morrow, then—"

She paused and trembled at the thought that her words had invoked. To-morrow—to-morrow! Where would it find Anna and herself? It would, she thought, see the end of this struggle, and somebody established at Maverick as its owner; but whom? Again she put away the troublesome reflection, and continued.

"I can only say that I am not ready for you to go yet, and that we will talk again about it."

"I am quite at your service, Aunt Helen," he replied. "Knowing nothing at all of your arrangements in case this place could no longer be your home (which of course I cannot know), I have been wishing to ask you to take this time to visit my mother, in Maryland. Anna, of course, would come with you; and as I am about ready to return, I will go along and show you the way. Can't you say yes to this?"

"Thank you, Roscoe; to-morrow will tell. I do not know myself whether Maverick is to be the home of Anna and me after to-day; a few hours more will tell. These momentous few hours will claim every particle of my time. I shall go to the village in half an hour; and as I do not wish it to be known where I go, or to excite any remark that may reach Oliver Maverick or his daughter, I shall

walk, and go by myself. I should like your company, Roscoe; but for the reason I have named, I cannot have it. I think I can leave the house without being noticed; and if my absence is made the subject of remark, or if any calls are made for me, you will say I am particularly engaged in my room. It is a deception—but the end will justify the means. You will please vacate this room, Anna, and lock the door, that the deception may not be discovered."

Mr. Grayle passed on before her, and walked through the hall. Anna lingered a little, and when he was out of hearing detained the housekeeper by the sleeve.

"One moment, mother," she said, with trembling voice. "There is something else that troubles me, and I must speak of it before you go."

Mrs. Roesselle understood what was coming. She closed the door, and put her arm tenderly about the girl, who laid her head upon her shoulder.

"What is it, Anna?" The housekeeper spoke softly, and smoothed the fair young head with her palm.

"I am almost afraid to say it," was the hesitating reply, and the girl looked around, half frightened. "But I understood Mr. Maverick to say when he was dying, that—that—I was his daughter."

"He said so, Anna."

"Was that true?"

"It was."

She hid her face in her foster-mother's bosom, and the gentle hand never ceased to caress her. She looked up at last, and said:

"It frightens me to think of it. You told me that I was an orphan, and that you took me from the family where the poor-officers had bound me out as a charity-child. I remember when I lived with the Gaunts, and when you came to take me. I never knew a father or a mother, and I never thought either could be living. But since Mr. Maverick died, I have thought what I wish were true, that you might be my mother."

The face of the speaker was raised to that of the housekeeper with an affectionate, pleading look, and a tear stood in the lady's eye. The head was drawn down upon her breast, and both her arms were embracing her.

"I did not tell you that you were an orphan, dear; it was because your own mother died soon after you were born. No, Anna, you are not my daughter by birth; God never

gave me any children, and I have more than once thanked him that it was so, that I could be a mother to you."

"You are my mother: I owe everything to you," said the girl gratefully. "My life would have been nothing, or worse than nothing, but for you."

Mrs. Roesselle bent down and kissed her.

"I knew that you were the child of Augustus Maverick," she said; "but he never suspected that I knew it. I kept the truth from you for your own good; because I knew he did not love you as a father, and that he suffered you to be here with me only for a purpose of his own. You will know very soon how this was so, and you will know how faithful I have been to you. Kiss me good-by for a little while, and go to your room and pray to God to send success to my efforts to-day for you."

"Who was my mother?"

The question came abrupt and sudden, and the housekeeper started back as Anna raised her face toward her. Her own face she quickly turned over her shoulder, that the girl might not see how white and seared it grew.

Who was her mother? To what purpose would Mrs. Roesselle obtain a settlement of the rights of this girl under the destroyed will; or to what purpose would these desperate adventurers be driven forth from Maverick, and Anna Maverick (as we must henceforth call her) established as its rightful owner by process of law, if that dreadful, haunting question was to continually arise? And not that question alone; let it once be answered, and the answer would instantly open the way to other questions which Helen Roesselle hoped and prayed might never be asked. Secrets which she hoped were buried in the grave forever; the blame of the dead, which had long lain unknown in the grave; the dreadful story of the past, and the miseries of others which she had silently borne for years—all these things she knew must be dragged into the light, and herself made a witness of them, by the answer of that question—who was this girl's mother?

It must be escaped; how, she could not tell; and she resolutely put away the troublesome question until her return from the village. She kissed the anxious, pleading face that was raised to hers, and replied:

"Your mother was a dear, good woman, who suffered a great deal, and who is now in heaven. Do not ask me to tell you more, my

child; you can surely feel that what I hold back from you is for your own good."

The face of Anna Maverick was sorrowful and full of wistful anxiety; but she trustingly returned the kiss of her foster-mother, and the two left the room together. Anna saw her enter the parlor; and seeing that there was no one to observe her, she locked the sitting-room door, and put the key in her pocket.

Oliver Maverick was pacing back and forth through the parlors when the housekeeper came in. He paused as he saw her, and then advanced to within a few feet of where she stood. Their eyes met; he looked arrogant anger upon her; and she (for she could not help it) looked defiance upon him.

"I am at your service, sir," she said.

"You will cease to be, immediately," he retorted, giving a literal turn to her remark. "Please understand, madam, that you are now dealing with the owner of this house and its lands." He paused, evidently expecting a reply; but she made none.

"I shall take immediate possession of this place," he said. "In fact, I consider myself as now virtually in possession. And you will please hand over to me at once the keys of the house, and all the property of the estate in your possession."

The housekeeper continued to look quietly at him.

"*Immediately?*" she said. "You forget, Mr. Maverick, that I have had entire charge of this house for more than ten years, and that there must be various unsettled accounts between the estate and myself. I have always paid all the servants and kept account of the domestic purchases, and I think you would experience many embarrassments, were I to leave you forthwith, without rendering you a written statement of many important matters. These things should be considered."

Mr. Maverick had overlooked them; and he was forced to confess it.

"I suppose this is necessary," he said, coldly. "How much time do you ask?"

"Only what is necessary. A few hours."

"Then you will be ready to vacate the house to-night, with your daughter and nephew?"

The lady felt her anger rising, as well at the insult of the words themselves, as at the tone in which they were conveyed. Most keenly did she feel the unnecessary harshness of this man, who, with his mask of hypocrit-

ical politeness thrown aside, was ready to drive her summarily from her old home. She answered with heightened color, and with much warmth.

"This is not just such treatment as I had a right to expect," she said. "I admitted you and your daughter here under circumstances in which most people in my position would have felt it their duty to shut you out, you—"

"I decline to hear anything further on that subject," he interrupted, angrily. "Your language is impertinent, madam; confine yourself to the subject. Name the earliest hour you can leave this house with your friends."

"To-morrow noon," she abruptly replied, stifling her resentment at his treatment. He bowed, and opened the door.

"You will then, in addition to the matters you spoke of, have ready a statement of wages due to yourself and all the house-servants. I shall probably discharge all of them. The management of the farm needs close looking after, and I shall probably discharge Mr. Terry also. The carriage will be ready at twelve o'clock, precisely, to-morrow, to take you and your friends away. You, of course, will avoid giving any directions or instructions about the house between now and then; your functions have already ceased."

He went directly up stairs after these uncourteous words, and communicated to his daughter the result of his interview.

"We shall see the last of them very soon," he said. "And when we are once rid of them, we shall never be troubled by them again. By the way, Laura, I want you to go down into the kitchen and give the servants the necessary instructions about dinner. I will go with you, and inform them that they will now take their orders from you only."

Before they descended on this business Laura looked from her window, and gave a troubled thought to Roscoe Grayle. Would he never disturb her again after he had left Maverick? Would she ever be able, in the enjoyment of her new wealth and station, to entirely expel these harassing thoughts of the man who despised her from her mind? And, since men were proverbially fickle, was it not possible that he would see cause to change his mind when he knew that she was really the mistress of Maverick, and would one day inherit all this wealth from her father?

Musing thus, as she looked from the window, she saw a female in a large black shawl and a large, homely sunbonnet, which hid her face, emerge from the back of the house, swiftly cross the grounds to the stables, and thence pass into the orchards, where she lost sight of her. Her father also saw the figure from where he sat; but neither of them thought the incident an unusual one, and no remark was made upon it. They did not suspect that the woman was Mrs. Roesselle, who in this disguise was making her stealthy visit to the village, by a circuitous route.

XIII.

Mrs. ROESSELLE entered through the orchards into a farm road, which passed for a considerable distance through the woods, striking thence across the meadows to a common adjoining the estate, from which the highway was easily accessible. She walked rapidly, and in less than two hours she was at the top of Mr. Jenks's office-stairs in the village, tapping for admission. She heard his voice calling "come in," and she entered. The lawyer was busy with some papers at a desk, with his back to her; but seeing who his visitor was, he immediately left his occupation and hastened to her.

"Good-morning, madam," he said, in a loud, cheery tone. "I am glad to see you here, where you come so rarely. What can I do for you?"

As Mr. Jenks had stated in a former conversation with Mrs. Roesselle, he had known her long and favorably. She, on her part, had the highest esteem for him, both as a lawyer and a man. At the time of the death of her husband she had found it necessary to consult him often about matters pertaining to the little property which was left; and in various ways since, he had befriended her and shown his good-will. She knew, therefore, that she could trust him with the disclosure that she proposed to make, and that she could implicitly rely on his opinion and advice.

Simply prefacing her statement by the remark that she had come to advise with him upon a matter of the very gravest importance—upon which he crossed his legs, put the tips of his fingers together, and dropped his head on his breast, in that attentive way which becomes a habit with professional men—she told him in a straightforward way of some of the late occurrences at Maverick.

Without deeming it necessary to disclose to him that Anna was the child of the Maverick last deceased, she said that from her knowledge of the estrangement of the two men, she had been satisfied for some years that Augustus would never allow Oliver to inherit his property; and she had also good reason to think that when the former made his will, it would be found that Anna was the one chosen to receive it. She described the unexpected coming of the brother and his niece to the mansion, their domestication there, and her discovery of the treachery of Jerry Small. She asked him to remember everything connected with the drawing and execution of the will, and what passed between himself and the brother; which Mrs. Roesselle of course did not know. She then described the means by which the brother and niece were admitted to the outer room; the stupor of herself and the other watchers; the alarm; the discovery of Laura Maverick at the bedside of the dying man, and the discovery of the loss of the will. Lastly, she handed to him, and he read, the letter of Jane Shorey; and concluded by informing him that Oliver Maverick had assumed control of affairs at the house, and warned herself and Anna to leave.

"I comprehend all these startling facts," said the lawyer, when she had finished, "and they amaze me—for several reasons. However, lawyers have no business to be amazed; it is no part of the profession; and we will skip that. I see that a very serious question arises upon these facts; and that I may be sure that I understand exactly what you have come here for this morning, please state it in your own language."

She did state it, briefly and clearly.

"To learn whether the wishes of Augustus Maverick can still be enforced, notwithstanding the loss of that will. In other words, is Anna to be deprived of that immense property, because the will that gives it to her is lost?"

Mr. Jenks nodded.

"That is the exact question that I supposed you would wish to settle," he said. "Before saying anything further, however, let me correct your phraseology a little, and refer to the will in question as something *destroyed*—not merely lost. You may be certain that this is so. After hearing your statement, it does not admit of a doubt in my mind, that the will was destroyed by these parties within ten minutes after they obtained it."

Mrs. Roesselle instantly agreed with him.

"Very well. Now, putting myself in the place of a jury, I think there can be little or no difference of opinion as to what these facts show. It is all circumstantial evidence, to be sure; but it is strong enough to convict of murder, if that were the charge involved. In fact, I fail to see how it can be distorted to any other conclusion than that these parties, after a course of plotting to that end, deliberately stole and destroyed the will."

"But what is to be the effect of that?" the lady eagerly asked.

For a moment the lawyer evaded a direct reply.

"I think I see one effect of it," he said. "If I correctly remember the law, they have committed a misdemeanor, for which they may be punished; fined, and possibly imprisoned for some months."

Mrs. Roesselle tapped the floor impatiently with her foot.

"I do not care for that," she said. "Any light punishment that could be inflicted on them would do no good. It would not give the property back to Anna; it would not undo this monstrous fraud, and enforce the will of Augustus Maverick. That is my question; how can *that* be done?"

Mr. Jenks had been thinking all the time that he talked, and the more he thought, the more serious his face became.

"My dear madam," he said, "it is the constant misery of the life of every lawyer who has any heart at all, that, like the humane physician, he is called upon to look upon pain and misery that he is powerless to alleviate. Year after year, as I sit here in this dingy room, I am appealed to by suffering innocence to interfere for it against rapacious fraud, or force, or rascality; and in five cases out of every ten I am appealed to in vain. It is all because of the imperfection of human law. The man who first said that human law was imperfect, uttered a truth that has never been again the less true since it was uttered, and that probably will never be any the less true, to the end of time."

"And this means," the lady faintly said, "that there is no relief for us in this case?"

"It means that I fear it, and what I have said is intended to prepare you for just such a miserable infirmity in the law. Let me examine the statute, however. I would not attempt to give a decided opinion in a matter of this importance without a careful reading of it."

He rose from his chair, and taking down from the shelves a bulky calf-covered volume, he opened it and ran down the index with his eye. Turning to a place in the volume, he read for a moment, paused, thought, read again, and then resumed his seat. Mrs. Roesselle saw in the distress of his sympathizing face that there was no hope; but she waited for him to speak.

"I find it just as I feared," he said. "The law gives the court the power, in cases of wills lost or destroyed by accident or design, to take proof of their execution and validity, and to establish them—subject to certain rules. Those rules should be broad enough to embrace such a meritorious case as this; and they fall short of it. The statute reads all well for us until we approach the close of it; and there we are confronted by these words:*

'But no will shall be allowed to be proved as a lost or destroyed will, unless its provisions shall be clearly and distinctly proved by at least two credible witnesses, a correct copy or draft being deemed equivalent to one witness.'

"You will not fail to remember, madam," the lawyer pursued, "what occurred at the bedside of Augustus Maverick just after we entered the chamber together. There was no one in the room but you and Mr. Maverick and I; and you stepped up to the bed and said, 'Here is the lawyer, sir, come to draw the will.' He opened his eyes, and seemed to understand. 'Will you have any one present but Mr. Jenks?' you asked; and he immediately and very plainly said 'no.' You then left the room, and did not return to it until I called you in to witness the will with me. And I presume you heard nothing of what passed between Mr. Maverick and myself after you left the room."

The housekeeper shook her head in despair.

"The door was shut all the time," she said, "excepting once when you came to ask me if I would be the executrix; and it was shut again just as soon as the few words necessary to the request had passed between us. I know nothing of the contents of the will excepting what you told me in the lower hall, as you were about to leave the house. Will that do?"

The lawyer shook his head.

* The lawyer in the story quotes correctly the law of the State of New York.—ED.

"I am sorry," he said, "that you are without remedy; and as helpless as I am sorry. The law, as you have heard, requires the evidence of at least two witnesses of the contents of the will; and I am the only person who has that knowledge obtained in such a way that the law will permit me to testify to it. The will was not read to you; you know nothing of its contents. I do not think it within the range of possibility, under the circumstances, that the directions that Mr. Maverick gave me for drawing the will were overheard by any person; it is too speculative to suppose anything of the kind. I must be regarded as the only witness who can testify to the provisions of that will. What then? There is not a person of my acquaintance who would not unhesitatingly believe that Augustus Maverick upon his deathbed gave his whole estate to that girl, upon my evidence of the fact; nay, there is not a reasonable person anywhere—there is not a jury that would refuse to give the fact implicit belief; it is a fact beyond all cavil; and the law will not allow it to be established. Why? Simply because it has said that in such cases there *must* be two witnesses. The law is unbending; it will allow of nothing less; it becomes in this case the shield of villany, the upholder of fraud, the oppressor of the innocent. I am very sorry to say that we can do nothing."

Mr. Jenks rose abruptly with the last words, and hurried away for a glass of water. Mrs. Roesselle was deathly white, and her consciousness seemed leaving her. A little of the water dashed in her face, and a swallow of it, revived her, and with a "thank you," she sat some moments longer, striving to collect her thoughts, and to recover her strength. Mr. Jenks did not disturb her; but when she arose to go, he came forward and gently detained her by the hand.

"I hope you will not go yet, madam," he said. "Although the affairs of your foster-child seem hopeless, so far as this estate is concerned, yet you may need some further counsel and assistance as to your future. I have thought that you would have something further to say to me."

"Not now," she replied, tremulously; and she thanked the kind-hearted lawyer for his sympathy. "To-morrow, perhaps, I may have to consult you again; now I must return."

She went to the door; he held it open for her, and inquired if she was quite strong

enough to walk. She told him that she was, and then paused in the doorway. She hesitated and looked away from him; he saw that she was still agitated, but did not see the conflict that was going on in her face.

"Instead of calling upon you, to-morrow," she said, raising her eyes, "I may ask you to come to Maverick."

"I will cheerfully come, to oblige you," he said.

"I will send word in the morning, if I think it necessary," she continued. "And as I have no longer the control of the stables, or of anything else, at the mansion, will you excuse my not sending you a horse?"

"Assuredly, madam. You know I have one myself."

He bowed again, and as she descended the steps, he reentered his office.

XIV.

MRS. ROESSELLE walked on through the streets of the village and along the highway like one stunned and mazed. She was conscious of her interview with the lawyer, and knew what she had heard from him; but she tried to cast the whole matter from her mind, and give it no thought. She realized that on the morrow the last act of the drama of fraud and wickedness at Maverick would be played, and Anna turned away from her own door, unless—and there she halted in her thoughts, and shrank back from the alternative, as the traveller in the darkness shrinks back from the edge of a precipice suddenly revealed to him. Beyond the hope that her interview with the lawyer had destroyed, there had risen before her from the very moment of her discovery of the loss of the will a shadowy hand, pointing as from the grave to a certain way of escape from this network of villany; and from that shadow she turned now, as before, and shudderingly refused to look upon it. She hurried along in the brightness of the warm May sunshine, listening to the songs of the birds, and looking at the flowers that sprang by the wayside, and striving to think of nothing else.

In this way she had completed half the distance back to Maverick, when she became conscious that in her abstraction she had wandered from the public road, and had nearly reached the parish church. Her name was pronounced by some person very near her as she made this discovery; and she saw

that she was passing the little habitation of Roger Brill, the old sexton. He was much older than when we last saw him, and his hair fell white over his shoulders. He sat in his accustomed seat on the bench, in front of the house; and he called aloud to her.

"Good evening, Mistress Roesselle," he said. "Wont you stop a moment and tell the old man the news?"

She paused, and then came nearer to him.

"There is no news, Roger," she said, "since the death and funeral at the mansion."

"Ay, ay," rejoined the garrulous old man, "I heard of it, and I should ha' gone up to the great house, but I'm a trifle rheumatic, and walking is not easy to me. And so another of the Mavericks has gone? I knew him when he was a stout and comely-looking fellow, not much like the skeleton they say he dwindled to before he died. But I've not seen him these ten years and more."

"When was that?" she asked. Her thoughts were absent from the old man's gabble, and her question was idle and almost involuntary.

"'Twas the night of the day that good Parson Roesselle was buried. He came here for the key to the church."

The lady's attention was instantly excited by his answer.

"Did he go into the church?" she asked.

"Ay, mistress; he did."

She drew nearer to him.

"Do you know what he went there for?" she asked.

"No; that's what I couldn't find out, mistress. I went to the church after him, but he'd locked the door, and I saw nothing but the light of his lantern, flashing up and going down in a curious kind of a way."

The woman who listened to this unexpected revelation knew what the object of Augustus Maverick was in making that night visit to the church; and there was another listening to Roger Brill who also knew. A man sitting on the bench by him when Mrs. Roesselle stopped continued to sit there after the two had begun to talk together. The lady merely looked at him once, and then gave him no further attention; but he heard all that passed, and when Roger spoke of the visit to the church he bent towards him with a start. Rising when the old man paused, he approached quite near to the lady, with the remark:

"You do not know me, Mrs. Roesselle."

She looked at his strong, bold features and

sunburnt, swarthy face, but saw nothing familiar in it. He was a man of something less than thirty years, with all the evidences of exposure and hardship in his face that years of seafaring and roaming by land are apt to make. Still, it was a frank, open face, and one that carried an assurance that the man could be trusted. His clothing was an odd medley of both seaman's and landsman's costume, and the lower part of his face was covered with a heavy beard.

"If I ever did know you," Mrs. Roesselle replied, "it must have been years ago. I do not know you now."

"And yet," he said, slowly, "you will know me if I speak my name. It is Edson Bayne."

"*Edson Bayne!*" she repeated; and her eyes were fixed as if with fascination upon his face. She placed a hand upon his shoulder, and eagerly scanned his features. "It is—it is!" she said, and took the hand that he offered. "My God, is this fate, or chance? or is it something more than both? I shall be forced to go as I am driven—to do what I am compelled."

The man looked at her and listened to her words.

"I do not know," he said, "whether or not you can guess what brings me here now. I have become a wanderer from choice, since you last saw me; the ocean is my home, and I am uneasy when I'm away from it. Can you guess what has brought me here?"

Too much agitated to speak, she made an affirmative sign.

"I thought you could," he said. "But I don't know all that has happened since I left this place; I have been pumping old Roger for an hour to learn, and have got little from him yet. Tell me briefly about Augustus Maverick and his doings, and then I may be able to tell what to do."

"Let us step aside, so that Roger cannot hear us," she said; and they walked two or three rods away from him. He watched them, and saw them talking together, the man gesticulating earnestly, and the lady seeming to speak now and then, but for the most part averting her face, and showing unmistakable signs of distress. They talked thus for half an hour, and then they came back again to where they had stood before.

"Can I stay with you all night, Roger?" the sailor asked.

"Bless your heart, Master Edson, yes, if you're willing to put up with my poor place and poor fare," was the reply.

"Then we will be at the mansion by nine o'clock," said Bayne, to Mrs. Roesselle. "You need say nothing to the old man about it; I will bring him with me."

"Had you not better wait till I send you word?" she hesitatingly asked.

"Why wait?" he answered, with impatience. "In plain words, ma'am, I consider you much too squeamish about this business. I can't go back to my ship and be easy, till I've seen the thing righted; and righted it must be. No, madam; your duty is plain. I don't want any signals when I see a craft in distress; I always bear down to relieve it, as quick as I can. I've got a plain story to tell, and I've come just in the nick of time to tell it. So to-morrow, ma'am, at nine o'clock, you'll see me bearing down on the house up yonder, with old Roger in tow."

Mrs. Roesselle sighed and looked at the speaker; and then bidding him good-morning, she walked back to the road, and continued on her way to the mansion. She reached it by the same way she had left it, undiscovered, as then; and meeting Anna in the hall she obtained the key of the sitting-room, and entered it.

"Nothing to-day, my dear child," she said, as Anna followed her into the room. "Leave me to myself, please; bear with me, dear. To-morrow this will be over; and then—"

She stopped abruptly, and pressed her hands to her brow.

"It aches and burns," she said. "But I will bathe it, and it will be well."

"You are sick, mother," Anna anxiously said. "Your face is flushed and your eyes are red; you are excited far beyond your strength. Let me put you to bed and nurse you."

"No, no—not to-day. I am not sick, Anna; I am nervous and excited; but that will soon pass off. Leave me to myself, my child."

Most unwillingly Anna obeyed; and through the day and night that followed the door was locked against all intrusion. Towards night one of the servants tapped and asked that Mrs. Roesselle would take some tea and toast that Miss Anna had prepared for her; but she met with a peremptory refusal, in such a tone of irritation that she could hardly believe that it was the housekeeper that spoke. And at night, when Anna on her way to her chamber tapped at the door, and asked leave to enter, she had only the reply:

"I can't see you now, my child. I am not sick; but I can't see you till morning."

She wanted to be alone; alone with her thoughts; alone with herself, to fight out the terrible struggle between duty and pride, between duty to one dear to her, and shame and disgrace to the good name she bore. She might have looked forward to the morrow impatiently, for the victory that she knew it would bring to Anna, and the discomfiture and defeat with which she knew it would overwhelm the guilty conspirators; but she painfully realized that this victory was now to be reached only through the path of deep reproach to the name that her wedding-ring had given her. She had tried—O, how had she tried—to reach that consummation by another way; but the abstraction of the will effectually barred that way, and left but this one avenue open. She had no choice—she must go on, whether she would or not, for events were hurrying her past her power to control them. The acknowledgment of Anna as his daughter by the dead Maverick; the girl's awakened anxiety to learn the whole truth; the knowledge that she had gained from the lawyer that the will was the same as though never made; the disclosure of the sexton; the astonishing appearance upon the scene of Edson Bayne, and his fixed determination to right a monstrous wrong, so far as he could—all these were as so many positive assurances to her, that whatever might be the consequences to herself, the rights of Anna Maverick must and should be asserted to the world.

The night, when it came, found her down upon her knees, wrestling with herself in prayer, and earnestly beseeching Heaven for light to guide her, and for strength to bear her up. And almost in the words of Him who two thousand years ago prayed at night in the garden, and wrestled with the agony of approaching pain, did she entreat the Hearer of all prayers that her bitter cup might pass from her.

"Spare me this humiliation, my Father! Show me how to do my duty without this

sacrifice! Deliver me, O God, from this trial, and let the crimes and errors of the past be mercifully concealed! Not as I will, but as thou wilt, O Father—but spare me—spare me—spare me!"

And by-and-by, when the fervor of her prayer had passed, and she still knelt by her bed, a picture from the past came before her. It was of her home at the pleasant parsonage, years before, and in particular one night in May when she waited tea for her husband; of his return from his parish calls with a man who looked stern and forbidding; and of a secret interview in the study that lasted far into the night, and sent her lonely and almost frightened to her chamber; and of her waking in the morning, and finding that her husband was still absent. How he came into the breakfast-room, haggard and pale, wet through with the rain that had fallen as he paced back and forth outside the house; and of his silence when she tried to learn his trouble. She could not learn it then; but one day it was all revealed to her, with its dreadful import; and from that day her peace had vanished, and this secret of misery had gnawed like a vulture at her heart.

But now her peace came back, her agony was soothed, and the path of duty was made plain. For, as she knelt there and fell into a kind of trance in thinking of the dreadful past, she seemed to feel that Alvin Roessello stood by her side, with a blessed, cheerful smile upon his face, where she had been wont to see nothing but pain, and sorrow, and remorse; that he laid his hands upon her head, though she could not feel them, and bade her go fearlessly on and protect the innocent.

"Nothing can harm me now," were the words she seemed to hear; "and one day God will reward you, dear wife, for all that you suffer now."

And so peace came at last to her bruised heart. She slept the night through peacefully; and the hours brought on the morning when the mystery was to be revealed, and Maverick given to its true owner.



THE STRUGGLE FOR MAVERICK.

A Dramatic Story....In Three Parts.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

IN the south-easterly part of the Empire State there is a small peninsula, shut in on the west by the Hudson River, and on the east by the waters of Long Island Sound. It is a region which is now thickly settled, being practically a suburb of the great metropolis of our country; but at a date not far from forty years ago, although there were several of the old colonial villages in the area referred to, there was also much wild land, with thousands of acres of forest, and wild hills, and nooks, and corners, which you will not find to-day. In 1830, which is the time now written of, there were some beautiful and productive farms and some stately residences on this peninsula; there was a considerable population, embracing many of the old and wealthy families whose ancestors had fought on the right side in the Revolution, and who were therefore permitted to retain their hereditary estates; and its inhabitants at that time, never dreaming of the astonishing improvements which a few years more began to develop, could never have looked to see this little territory as densely populated as it now is. It was in truth a very different place then; and notwithstanding its neighborhood to the great city, we could trace in it many of the characteristics of our new western country. It was, about the time named, the theatre of curious and startling domestic events, which it is now my privilege to record.

Not many miles below Tarrytown, where the Hudson begins to narrow and to lose the picturesque beauty which attends most of its course, the east bank of the river assumes the form of an abrupt precipice, perhaps seventy feet in height. There is hardly gradation enough in its descent to break the flight through the air of a stone dropped from the top of the cliff; it would probably fall clear of its side, into the water beneath. But the river changes with the lapse of time; and although now it has invaded the shore at this point so that there is a depth of six feet at the very foot of the cliff, yet forty years ago

there was a smooth strip of sand, like what you may see at Coney Island, intervening between the shore and the water. Now, too, trees grow far out on the brow of the cliff, and the highway runs quite close to it, as it did then; but now you might not know of the danger that lurked beneath your feet in approaching the edge of the bank at this point, until you had put aside the interposing boughs. If you did that, you would start back affrighted to find yourself treading so near the jaws of destruction. But part the branches again, cling to the stoutest of them, and look over. The jagged side of the cliff falls beneath you so precipitously that the sight will dizzy you; the river runs seventy feet below, and the stone that you drop falls with a very faint splash in the water.

Such is the 'Tory's Leap.' The place derives its name from a well-authenticated tradition of the Revolution relating to one Simeon Barnwell, a desperate character of the neighborhood, who espoused the cause of King George at the outbreak of the war, and who, after the city was occupied by the British, was put in authority over the country between Tarrytown and Manhattan Island.

Like all base natures when invested with temporary power, he exercised it brutally and rapaciously, making himself the pest and terror of the farmers of the neighborhood who refused to openly avow allegiance to the king. With a band of choice spirits he ravaged the country, plundering, outraging, and burning, until the enemy's power in this quarter was broken and the evacuation of the city left him without allies to support him. Prudence would have dictated flight, at this juncture; but Barnwell, apparently believing that the people were too much in terror of him to molest him, boldly remained at home, setting the country at defiance. It was a false security; the British transports had not cleared the Narrows when Barnwell was surrounded in his house by a crowd of injured and exasperated men who demanded his surrender. His answer was a shot which instantly killed two of them; and then the

infuriated party broke into the house to seize him. He was not found for some minutes, and then the horsemen of the crowd espied him trying to escape from the barn mounted on a fleet brown mare which had often served him well in time of need. Instant pursuit was made and continued for some miles; when the desperate tory, perceiving that the two foremost of his pursuers were fast gaining on him, riding with pistols in their hands, ready to slay him on capture, turned his horse sharp to the river, and urged her off at this cliff! The two fleet horsemen pulled up in time to save themselves; but such had been the desperate energy of the tory's leap that horse and man fell into deep water, and floated down the stream, dead and mutilated.

Such the legend. But other tragic occurrences are connected with this dangerous locality, besides that which gave it name; one in particular, which is directly germane to the incidents that are now to be narrated.

In the spring of 1830 a fisherman upon the river discovered a human body lying on the sand at the foot of the cliff. It could not have lain there long, because he was positive that he rowed inshore and examined this place at nightfall of the previous day, desiring to find a better place to set his lines. There was nothing there then but the sand of the beach; but in the early hours of the following morning, while the mists were still rising from the river, as he came to examine his catch, he was horrified to find a human body on this sand. Beaching his boat, he examined it carefully. The clothes were torn, the neck apparently broken, and there were several bruises on various parts of the body, but no wounds such as would be made by firearms or sharp weapons. The conclusion was irresistible that the unfortunate man had fallen or had been thrown from the summit of the cliff. And it was quite as clear that he must have died instantly. He was unknown to the fisherman; and wisely leaving the body where he had found it, the latter made haste to notify the nearest coroner of his discovery. A jury was summoned, and the inquest was held on the spot. The body was carefully and critically examined, and a surgeon pronounced it free from the marks of any injuries excepting such as must have been received by the fearful fall. The bank above was scrutinized, and no evidences of a struggle were found. The grass appeared to have been somewhat trampled down; but no more than the feet of one man might naturally have

done. Nay, more; there were other evidences discovered which made it plain to the jury that the deed was one of deliberate and premeditated suicide. A gold watch was found, hung by the chain to a bramble between the bank and the road; beside it was a miniature; and the inference was irresistible that these things had been carefully laid away before the fatal plunge into eternity. But no note, no scrap of writing was found to explain the reason of the act, or to indicate what he desired to be done with these objects of his last fond care. The watch bore the inscription on the inner case, "H. L. From his mother. 1827." And there was no difficulty in recognizing the beautiful face in the miniature as that of Mrs. Roesselle, the newly-married wife of the Episcopal minister of the parish.

The majority of the jurors had known the deceased in his lifetime; none of them hesitated to pronounce the body that of Horace Levin; and the facts concerning the young man, as they were generally known in the neighborhood, were enough to furnish a motive for the suicide. He was the only and petted son of a wealthy widow who lived at Albany; but for a year past he had spent most of his time in and about Tarrytown, endeavoring to gain the affections of a very beautiful young girl, an orphan, Helen Westcott by name. It was supposed at first that he was the favored one among her many suitors, and it was known that she had given him the miniature which was found on the bank quite early in their acquaintance; but rumor soon began to whisper that the Rev. Alvin Roesselle, the gifted, young, and handsome clergyman of the country parish, had supplanted Levin; and this appeared to be the truth. The effect upon the latter was noticeable. He lost both appetite and spirits; he thinned and paled, and grew to be only the shadow of his former self. Even after the minister was the well known accepted suitor, and Levin's visits had necessarily been discontinued, the unhappy youth still hung about the neighborhood, often about the house, seemingly unwilling to accept his disappointment as final and irrevocable. And on the wedding-day, when Mr. Roesselle and Helen were married at the church by a minister from the city (a college-mate of the bridegroom), in the presence of a house full of friends and parishioners—even then Horace Levin was seen in the church-porch, dark, miserable, silent, hovering like a cloud upon

the joy of the occasion. Some of the friends of the bride and groom, fearful of intended violence, kept purposely between him and them as they entered and left the church; but there was no necessity for this. Levin watched them with gloomy brow as they came and went; and when the bridal party drove away to the parsonage he disappeared. This happened eight days before the discovery of his dead body on the sands; and it could not be discovered by the coroner that he had been seen more than twice since that morning. Once, three days after, and just at night-fall, a laborer who had been working all day in the parsonage garden, and who knew Mr. Levin quite well, saw him walk slowly and furtively in the twilight, in front of the gate, pause an instant, and look in; and then, when the man addressed him with "good-evening, sir," he started and walked rapidly away, without reply. And half an hour before dark, on the evening before the discovery of the body, some boys to whom the deceased was also well known, and who were driving home their cows along the river-road, saw him loitering along the bank half a mile below the cliff. They said that he took no notice of them, and that he was only occupied with breaking a stick into small pieces and throwing them one by one over the bank as he walked very slowly up the river. And this was all that the coroner could discover.

More to give complete satisfaction to their minds than in the expectation of discovering anything additional in the case, the jury requested that the examination of Mr. and Mrs. Roesselle might be taken. It was fortunately very brief; fortunately, for the circumstances of the case naturally made allusions to it extremely painful to them. But they knew absolutely nothing that could shed any further light upon the motives or the mental condition of the miserable youth. Mr. Roesselle had not seen him since the wedding, and was as surprised to find that he had continued in the neighborhood, as he was horrified to learn of his tragic end. Mrs. Roesselle had met him once in the street at Tarrytown, two days before, when he passed her, looked fixedly into her face, and walked quickly on, without remark. He appeared very much agitated, and she could not help observing a wildness in his eyes, and a general strangeness of his manner, which she had never seen before. She had forbore to say anything to her husband about it, as the subject was an unpleasant one. This was the last she had seen of Mr.

Levin. He had never been to the parsonage; he had never troubled her in any way; and the news of his death was shocking in its suddenness to her. When they laid the miniature before her, and told her where they had found it, she was affected to tears.

"Poor boy—poor, crazy boy!" she said. "I have done him no intentional wrong; I thought he might see that he would be far happier without me than with me; and I am distressed by his death beyond measure. His poor mother—how I pity her! May I keep this, Alvin?" And she held up the miniature to her husband, who gravely bowed.

In view of these facts, the coroner's jury returned their inquisition that the deceased, Horace Levin, had come to his death by his own intentional act, without the aid, furtherance, or act of any other person or persons whomsoever, by jumping from the bank known as the Tory's Leap, on the Hudson River, to the shore below, on the night of the 17th or the morning of the 18th of April, 1830; by means whereof his neck was fractured, and himself instantly killed. The verdict went upon record, and stands to-day as the official evidence of the cause of Levin's death.

The body was taken to Tarrytown, laid out, shrouded, and coffined; and then, by reason of the absence of the minister from the village, it was conveyed to Mr. Roesselle's parsonage, whither the bereaved mother shortly came from Albany. The same church which had witnessed the union of the clergyman and Helen Westcott was filed again to hear the service for the dead read over the corpse of him who had stood gloomily in the porch at the wedding; and where there were then smiles of joy there were now tears and faces of sympathetic grief. The tones of Mr. Roesselle's voice faltered as he read the service, and more than once he seemed almost overpowered with emotion. The body was taken by the stricken mother to her own home, for burial; and then, as time passed on, the remembrance of Horace Levin, his unhappy love, and his dreadful fate, became a thing of the past, and grew faint, with other things of the past, to the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

But fate, or circumstance, call it what you will, works silently and mysteriously while men sleep and months pass; and when Horace Levin met his death at the Tory's Leap, on the night of the 17th or the morning of the 18th of April, 1830, a train of events was started, which, radiating to diverse lives

and leading through different homes, wrought powerfully for good and ill to those whom this narrative concerns.

PART FIRST.—I.

THE GATHERING OF A STORM.

ABOUT midway between Tarrytown and the city, on the direct road, there stood at this time one of the most charming of all the charming cottages that overlook the Hudson. It was built on a gentle rise of ground, ten rods back from the highway; the spacious grounds in front were left in a grassy lawn which was closely shaven in the summer time, and which was overshadowed by four lofty oaks, around which were rustic seats. From the back and side windows of the cottage the view embraced a long stretch of the river and its scenery, with passing vessels. The front was covered with a veranda; the spot was always shady in the fierce summer heats, and so high that it caught many of those aggravating breezes which we can see rustling the treetops while not a breath of air stirs below. If quiet amid natural beauty were the wish of the passer's heart, he must often have wished for such a situation as this, as he passed along the dusty road.

There were many visitors at this place in those days; all gentlemen. Those who were familiar with the appearance of the house inside knew that it was plainly but tastily furnished; that while there were no evidences of wealth in or about it, the books, and pictures, and musical instruments showed that it was the home of at least one cultured mind. And those who had the entree of the cottage knew that its mistress was Miss Augusta Traynor, and that she and her domestic were its only occupants.

And there were many, very many, of that neighborhood, who did not know Miss Traynor personally but who knew well what she was and what she had been. There were many who had never seen her, and who knew nothing of her fascinations except by hearsay, who could have told you that Miss Traynor was an orphan, and had lived at the cottage two years; that her father had been one of the most prosperous of the merchant-princes of the city, and that Augusta had been among the foremost of its acknowledged belles, with suitors by the score; that the death of Mrs. Traynor by the upsetting of a pleasure-yacht in the bay, was followed by the bankruptcy

of Mr. Traynor, and that little more was saved from the wreck of his princely fortune than sufficient to purchase this cottage and to furnish it in a humble style; and that the ruined merchant had died of a broken heart very shortly after their removal hither. And it was said that the change in Augusta Traynor's circumstances had by no means deprived her of her lovers, but that no lady in the vicinity had half as many as she.

There was truth in this, and a single day's watch at the cottage would have verified it. There were many in the city who had admired this girl in the days of her bellehood, and had looked upon her as a prize to be won, who now, though they knew her to be shorn of fortune, could not entirely withdraw themselves from her influence, and who therefore came up often from the city to look upon her face and listen to her music, and enjoy the charm of her conversation. A less beautiful woman than she, trained in the society that she had known, and surrounded by her peculiar class of admirers, might have lost them all with the loss of wealth; but men everywhere, all over the world, will pay willing court to the highest types of beauty, and even mercenary fortune-hunters will look admiringly at beauty that is not gilded with wealth, and regret that it is not gilded, before they pass on to worship at other shrines. And thus it was with Augusta Traynor. Chafing under the restraints of her reverses, remembering with sighs of discontent her former triumphs in the parlors of wealth and luxury in the metropolis, she found herself, at the age of thirty, beautiful, because her mirror told her so, ambitious of a grand and advantageous match, because she felt the promptings of the desire in every breath she drew, still sought after, still flattered, and still unmarried. And these are hard circumstances with which to surround any woman. They are apt to be fatal to honesty of purpose; they are more apt to be fatal to the dictates of true love. The sequel proved this true of her.

She stood one afternoon of that summer upon the veranda in front of the house, listening to the farewells of two young gentlemen from the city whom she had been entertaining since morning. She had known them both in the days of her father's affluence; they had often contended for the honor of her hand in the dance, and she knew that in those other days she might have brought either of them to her feet with the offer of his

hand, with but a look. Upon this day they had chatted of theatres and operas, of parties and weddings, and had blown back and forth with her the frothy small-talk of extra-fishionable life; and she had likewise chatted lightly, and smiled emptily, and played for them the trifles of music that they liked. They had far exceeded the time allotted to this call, they said, as the clock chimed three, and they rose to go. But that was not wonderful, one of them added, for who ever did get away from Miss Traynor's presence without a large sacrifice of time? Yes, and a larger sacrifice of heart, the other added; and then both of the exquisites laughed, and bowed, and simpered, and Augusta held the cheek tighter on her face, and kept down the look of weary disgust that strove to occupy it; and she smiled too, as people sometimes smile at the stake. And then her visitors hoped to be permitted to call again, and really longed to see her in the city again, and thought that if they ever prayed, they would pray that New York might not languish much longer without Miss Traynor; and then they just touched the tips of her fingers with those of their scented kids, and bowed four or five times more; and then, having consumed eight minutes by the clock in making their adieux, they were gone.

"By Jove, what a fine girl!" one of them exclaimed, when just out of earshot down the walk.

"I don't know of anything like her in the city, Ned," was the response.

"But she's poor."

"I suppose."

"And is all out of the set."

"Of course."

"So she wont do for either of us."

"Certainly not."

And with this conclusion the two disappeared from sight. The reader will not regret to know that the needs of our narrative will not require their further appearance.

Their remarks were made beyond the hearing of Augusta Traynor; but had she heard every word she could not have read these young men more thoroughly, nor known what was passing in their minds more perfectly than she did. She stood erect upon the veranda some moments after she had lost sight of them, her queenly head thrown back, her dark eyes kludling, and her thin, sensitive nostril quivering with the strength of her feelings. The cloud grew darker upon her face; it seemed to borrow a shadow from her

raven hair; and presently her thoughts broke out in an impatient stamp of the foot, and bitter words that escaped her as she walked up and down the piazza.

"Fools! fools!" were the first ungentle words. "How much longer am I to sit here and play my lady to these impudent coxcombs, who, because they have known me in better days, when my favor was a prize, dare to come here to see with their own eyes how well I can bear adversity. What am I to them but a recollection?—what do they care now for me, more than to make me the subject of an idle hour's curiosity? Nothing. With fortune, I was something in their eyes—I was more than all other women; without it, I am become as nothing but an ornament. I am weary, I am sick and tired of such trifling; I will not see them again, or any like them. They shall know that I know why they come here; and they will then begin to save themselves the trouble of coming."

She paused in her walk, and leaned her hand against the pillar of the veranda.

"Yet how are they worse than I?" she queried of herself. "To them, marriage is only the ladder by which they climb to wealth that brings them independence of toil, which confirms them in a life of idle luxury, and which raises them to a higher social plane than they can ever reach alone. Is this not much the same with me? Are not my days and nights given to scheming and planning how I may regain what I have lost? And do I not know that if it is to be done, it can only be by an advantageous marriage?"

Augusta Traynor started at the sound of the last question, as I fancy many of us would be startled could we hear our unspoken thoughts put into speech, and looked hurriedly around her to see that no person had overheard her confession. She sat down upon a seat on the veranda, and putting her hand to her forehead occupied herself seriously with the endeavor to settle decisively in her own mind whether what she had just declared in a question was to be the rule of her actions. Was love to bow to ambition? Was her heart, and its best impulses, to yield to an inordinate craving for the mastery of wealth, for the pride of station, and the brilliancy of a life such as she had lived? She sat with her eyes covered, and thought and wrestled over these questions, until the clock striking four aroused her. Then she started up and looked up the road. There was a glimpse of it to be seen, more than a mile away, between the

elms; and her practised eye discovered a slight rising of dust, even at that distance.

"I told him to come to-day for his answer," she said, gazing fixedly at the dusty spot till it disappeared behind the trees. "Five o'clock was the hour I named. He was always too early; he will be here in a few minutes. I promised him a *final* answer; nay, I gave him reason to hope that it would be such as he desired. What shall I do—my God, what shall I do?"

She was much moved; both hands were over her face, and she swayed herself back and forth in a convulsion of emotion. When she uncovered her face it was rigid and harsh in the darkness of its beauty, and her brow was ruffled by the scowl that came with her contending thoughts.

Her eye fell upon her music-book, which lay at her feet. She took it up, and opening it, drew from between its leaves a square of bristol-board, on which her own cunning fingers had drawn the face of him she loved. It is more than she had ever uttered aloud, but she had confessed the truth to her heart more than once; and now, as her eyes rested on the picture, she again confessed to herself what she would not put into words—"That is the man I love!"

The face was one that many women would have loved. The hand that drew it was wonderfully skilled in the use of the pencil, and it had disposed the light and shade on hair and brow, in the eyes, and over all the face, and brought forth from the paper a picture which only a good artist could make, and therefore a perfect resemblance. There was no color about it; but you knew as well without it as with it that the hair that waved carelessly about the round, full face was brown, that the eyes which sparkled with something of defiance, if not wickedness, were blue, and that the face must be ruddy and fair. It was a handsome face, but not a good face. You felt in looking at it that the strong will which it showed must be kept in constant exertion to repress the evil tendencies that it suggested; that it was a face in which more could be feared than hoped. Augusta Traynor held up the picture before her eyes and gazed long and earnestly at it. The harshness disappeared from her brow, her eyes grew soft and luminous, her lip trembled, and all the gentler part of the woman came to the surface. In one moment she thought of the proud, impulsive, headstrong man whose visits to the cottage she had en-

couraged; of the manly, eager way, in which he had entreated her love; and of her promise, given two days before, that she would answer him once for all at this hour.

"And may I hope for such an answer as I wish?" he had asked. Never had she heard his voice quiver before; it did quiver with those words. And she had smiled in answer, and sent him away strong-hearted, resolved to give up the baser part of life, to live purely and restrain his passions, that he might deserve her love and make her happy.

And did she not love him? The picture was its own sufficient answer. She had drawn every stroke of it from memory, in his absence; and memory never could have so faithfully prompted her hand if the prompting of love had not also been there. Without love, such a performance must have been a miracle; with love, it became possible.

She sat there some moments longer, fighting out with herself the world-old battle in that female heart between ambition and love; and though the struggle was fierce and strong, it ended as such struggles always end in natures such as hers. One tear dropped upon the picture—a precious tear indeed, for it marked the instant when selfishness triumphed forever over love in this woman's heart; and then her face grew proud and stern again. Deliberately she tore the face in two and concealed the pieces in the music-book; and from that instant her decision was fully taken.

"How could I hesitate one moment?" she reflected, impatiently tapping her foot against the trellis. "He has nothing that I want, but love; and that is the least a woman wants! Pshaw—let me forget as fast as may be that I was ever weak enough to think of him. My game goes higher than he, poor fellow, can rise; and I'll bring it to my feet quickly enough."

She had not noticed that during the last few moments of her intense preoccupation of thought a horseman had dismounted at the gate, secured his horse, and walked with eager steps up to the veranda. She did not see him, and she was unconscious of his presence, until he pronounced her name.

"Augusta!"

She started and raised her head; the suddenness of his appearance discomfited her, and the blood flowed all at once into her face. He interpreted the sign as his heart wished, and his arm was quickly thrown about her.

"Augusta—my own dear Augusta!" he

exclaimed, and stooped to kiss her. His breath was hot upon her cheek before she could disengage herself from his arm; and then she started back, and her eyes flashed angrily upon him.

"Don't touch me," she said. "You are crazy. Mr. Maverick—"

"I begin to be afraid I am," he interrupted. "How have I offended you, how have I misunderstood you, Augusta?" He stopped; she was looking him full in the face. It was the face of the picture.

"You came for an answer," she said, with chilling reserve.

"Yes; and I thought from your looks—" he eagerly interrupted; but she stopped him.

"You would do well always to wait for a lady's answer," she said. "Here is mine; I cannot be your wife."

Darkness swept into the florid face of the man as into the summer sky at an eclipse.

"You *cannot*?" he repeated. She bowed. He ground his boot upon the edge of the step, and then broke out furiously:

"By Heaven, Augusta Traynor, I don't understand it. You have received my visits with favor; you have showed your preference for me in a dozen ways; you would not tell me 'no' when I asked you two days ago to wed me, but you put me off till now, smiling encouragement on me all the time. Augusta, stop a minute and think. You know me well; you *know* that such a passion as I have for you can't enter into a man's very life, as it has into mine, and then be uprooted all at once, as you want me to tear this out, without taking away all the good part of that life with it. Now think, woman—think, *THINK*, I say, before you destroy me!" She quailed before the fury of his aspect, and he made a strong effort, and moderated his tone. "Have you not loved me?"

"Perhaps I have," she replied. Her face was pale; her fingers pulled a rose to pieces; but her voice was steady.

"You may have heard bad reports of me. I have not been a good man—I mean to be, God and Augusta Traynor permitting! If that is the cause—"

"That is not the cause," she interrupted. "I have not been influenced in this way against you."

"Then tell me why you have decided to make me wretched. Tell me why." He sat down in the seat she had vacated, and looked at her with desperate curiosity.

"Let me ask you to end this scene, Mr.

Maverick." She spoke in a light, easy tone; and as she proceeded she fell into a strain of banter. "If I did love you a little—what then? Must a woman marry a man, and every man, whom she loves a little? Mercy on me, what a world we should have then!"

She laughed merrily; a forced laugh, which caused Maverick to grind his teeth with rage.

"No, Mr. Maverick," she went on, "let us put an end to this, and never speak of it again. As I was foolish enough to confess, I have loved you a little; but I have never thought of marrying you. What, will nothing satisfy you? Well, then, if you must know the truth, I have promised my hand to another."

Augustus Maverick could not know that this was untrue, and that she spoke of an intention rather than of an accomplished fact. He clutched the arms of the chair in which he sat, and spoke one hoarse whisper.

"His name!"

She hesitated; and then, looking toward the road started and grew paler. Another horseman had ridden up to the gate, had dismounted, and was traversing the walk with rapid steps.

"It may be as well," she reflected. "If I tell you," she said, aloud, "will you promise to do him no injury, and not to forget that you are in the presence of a lady?"

"Yes," Maverick jerked out.

"He is behind you now."

Maverick faced about, and found himself confronted by a man of his own height, and of similar features, but with darker hair and complexion. The recognition was instant and mutual.

"Oliver!"

"Augustus!"

They were brothers.

The new-comer stood still, regarding the scene with a cold eye, and exhibiting not the least agitation, hardly any surprise, in his hard face. He was apparently the elder of the two by at least ten years. Whatever he may have thought of the presence of his brother here, the feeling was not shown upon his self-contained face, nor expressed in words.

Augusta Traynor was quick of wit; but she was not equal to this emergency. She smiled and banished the tremor from her lips; but she could not upon the instant think how a collision between these two was to be avoided. What accident or freak could have

brought Oliver Maverick here at this hour she could not conjecture; it was not according to her understanding with him, and was at best a frightful *contretemps*. She looked at Augustus; he uttered a low cry, and pressing his hand to his head, staggered back against the lattice. Then he removed his hand, and his eyes seemed to burn and glitter with fury as he looked from one to the other.

"You will remember your promise?" Augusta entreated.

"Yes, yes—I will remember my promise," he bitterly cried. "I was not to injure the man whom you meant to marry; and he is my brother. He knew where my heart lay—none knew it better than he; and he was base enough to supplant me. Well, well—I will not injure him; I will not shoot him, nor cut his throat—but this I will do—I will make him an outcast from his home, and a penniless beggar on the earth! And I will not injure you, Augusta, although you have this day treacherously given me over to the baser part of myself; but I warn you that if you marry this man, his fate shall also be yours. Fools, fools both of you—how clearly do I see through the arguments that he has been base enough to use, and you treacherous enough to accept, for my undoing. Did he tell you he is the old man's favorite, that all Maverick Farm, and all the stocks and mortgages are to be his, and that he will make you richer than you used to be? Ah, you turn red, Miss Traynor; my easy guess was the true one. Yet I tell you both,"—and the speaker raised his hand above his head, and spoke with a terrible earnestness,—"*that though I injure you not in body, though I leave you free to enter into this marriage which rests in treachery, in falsehood, in deceit, and in the selling of the soul of at least one of you for the promise of gold—the price shall never be paid!* Marry, if you dare, I'll be faithful to my word."

He looked at Augusta; she trembled, spite of herself, before his passionate earnestness, and cast down her eyes. So beautiful she looked as she stood there, that the fiery heart of the man was almost touched again; and then he struck his face with his flat hand, and recovered his mood. Without another word he stepped past his brother, and seizing Augusta Traynor in his arms kissed her, once, twice, thrice, upon the lips. The action was so sudden and so unexpected that she neither cried out nor struggled; and when she found

herself released, Augustus Maverick was striding towards the gate, half way down the walk. The two never spoke together again.

Before Oliver Maverick and Augusta Traynor had parted that day, their marriage engagement was consummated. And some weeks afterwards they were married.

There are with some men turning-points of life, when an act done or left undone, or a point lost or won in life's great game influences them forever. It was so with Augustus Maverick. He came upon this day with his heart full of peace and love, to plight his vows to Augusta Traynor, and in receiving her love to enter upon a better life. One word from her would have reclaimed him—nay, one look would have done it. He found himself, instead, proud, hot-blooded man as he was, the victim of a heartless sacrifice, a deliberate deceit, a soulless bargain; and the good aspirations that were rising within him were utterly and forever cast down. And as he mounted his horse and galloped up the road, his tumultuous brain was busy with plans of dreadful import to some of those—it may be to all—who have become and are yet to be actors in this drama of real life.

II.

His love for Augusta Traynor had stopped this man short when he stood upon the threshold of an enormous sin. The treatment which he had just received at her hands, while stifling his good impulses, brought into renewed life the bad; and as he urged his horse into a harder gallop his mind ran riot over designs and projects which had been for months lain aside. One, in particular, rose uppermost; and wherever his thoughts wandered, they continually returned to it. But he did not yield to it at once; he resisted the thought at first, and tried to turn it off; and then, as it pressed more clamorously on him, he succeeded. He stopped his horse by the side of the road, and dismounting, seated himself upon a large stone, while he held the rein.

"Let it be so, then," he moodily muttered. "I would have had it otherwise; but I can't help it. It's an ugly thing to do, and I've been putting it away from me, hoping that I never should have heart for it. If I have the heart for it now, I say it's not my fault. Let the blame be with those who have driven me to the bad."

Conscience was fierce within him, and as he sat there he repeatedly muttered the words, "I don't care; let it be so; the fault will not be mine; let them bear it who deserve it;" as if to fortify himself in his purpose, and to drown all consciousness of wrong within him. The sun had not yet set, though the long summer day was drawing to a close; and as he sat and held the rein, while his horse cropped the grass by the roadside, he looked down the highway over which he had passed, and saw a moving speck descending the hill half a mile back. He knew at once that it was a horse and rider; and though he was not in the mood for company, and would not have endured the companionship of most of the men whom he knew, he waited and looked, rather idly than from any sense of curiosity. The black speck advanced slowly; the horse was evidently coming on a walk or a very deliberate trot. The sun shining from the west had thrown the shadow of the hill over the moving speck, so that it had been indistinct; but the instant it came out into the broad sunlight it was outlined sharply against the hill, and Maverick, as he looked, suddenly jumped to his feet and uttered an exclamation. He was an expert horseman and an enthusiastic lover of the horse; an animal once seen by him was always remembered in its gait and movements, as well as in its form; and he at once recognized the advancing horse as one that he had often seen. That horse never had but one rider, he well knew; and as he leaned upon his own saddle and eagerly looked up the road, his new emotion found vent in words.

"Has the devil thrown that man in my way at this moment?—he, of all other men on earth—lest I should slacken my purpose?"

He paused abruptly, and looked still more eagerly. Horse and rider advanced on a jogging trot, for the animal was old and decrepit; and in a few moments more were within a few rods of the spot where Maverick stood.

"The man himself!" was his whispered soliloquy. "Fate wills it; I only follow. But by Heaven, how I should astonish him!"

He was in the saddle again with the quickness of an expert rider, and held his mettled animal in check by the roadside. The newcomers advanced, and were soon almost abreast of him. The rider was dressed in a suit of black throughout, except the straw hat upon his head, and he sat loosely upon the saddle with his arms down and his head fallen upon his breast in a reverie. He might have

passed Maverick unobserved had not the latter saluted him in a loud voice.

"Good-morning, parson. Which way?"

The rider suddenly raised his head, and exhibited the face of Alvin Roesselle, the clergyman. It was a pale, sallow and rather sad face, with high cheek bones and strongly marked features. He looked like a born student, with his great expanse of forehead, and his sunken, brilliant eyes; but there was, too, beneath his habitual gravity, almost sadness of face, an expression of sweetness which came forth at call. He was startled now at the suddenness of the salutation, breaking in upon his thoughts; and as he looked up and saw by whom he was addressed, he was somewhat puzzled that he should have been addressed at all. About the man before him, he knew nothing more than that he was the second son of old Ezra Maverick, of Maverick Farm, and reputed the hardest drinker, the roughest rider, the most dissolute young man for many miles around. Personally he knew nothing of him; he had never spoken with him; and he remembered that when he called at Maverick House some weeks before, the old man was sick and declined to see him, and that both the sons were away from home. In the parish church there was a great square pew which was the hereditary property of the Mavericks, and he had heard from some of the oldest parishioners that many years before, when Ezra Maverick was young and just married, he had occupied the great pew regularly with his wife, at seasons of worship. It was a practice that had long been discontinued; not once since the death of his wife had Ezra Maverick sat there, and no one had ever seen either of the sons within the walls of the sanctuary. It was therefore with some natural embarrassment that Mr. Roesselle returned the salute.

"Mr. Augustus Maverick, I believe," he said.

The other nodded and wheeled his horse into the road.

"I have waited for you," he said, abruptly. "Not that I expected you," he made haste to add, "but—I saw you coming, and waited."

"I have been over to visit old Norah Adney," said the clergyman. "The poor soul is dying with consumption, and I try to see her at least twice a week."

And then there was a pause of some minutes, while they rode along side by side, Maverick constantly curbing his horse to the pace of the slower one beside him. For twenty

minutes the conversation never went beyond commonplaces about the weather and the news; and then it ceased entirely, and a dead silence prevailed between the two. There was no bond of sympathy between them, and the manner of Maverick was rather repellent than otherwise. This, coupled with the bad character that rumor ascribed to him, constrained the clergyman to silence, when with almost any other stranger his graceful and easy address and conversation would have been charming. He glanced furtively at his companion as they rode on, and Maverick looked over his horse's head, straight up the road. Once, however, he turned his face and looked at the other, and that was when they had approached very near to the spot known as the Tory's Leap. The clergyman had discovered the locality, and a peculiar smile crossed Maverick's face as he observed the shudder that crossed that of his companion.

"A spot of much interest," Maverick said, suddenly checking his horse directly opposite the bank. As he pronounced the words he never removed his eyes from his companion's face, and he saw that sickly shudder cross it again.

"A most horrible place," was the low response.

"Yes, to be sure; in one sense, I suppose that is so," the other rejoined, in a loud voice. "But it is an interesting spot, too. I'll warrant you now, parson, you never went to the edge of the bank and looked over there where that poor devil of a Levin made an end of himself last April. Have you?"

"Never, never—and I shall never wish to. The associations of the place are too awful to allow me to think seriously of such a thing. Let us go on."

Maverick turned his head away, that his companion might not see the exulting smile that ran over it.

"A hard fate—wasn't it, parson?" he asked, never moving to go on.

"Yes, yes—hard enough. But I must ride on."

"Did you know that unhappy young man?" was the next question. The speaker still held his rein tight, and looked full at the face of the clergyman.

"No. I do not think I ever spoke to him. But really, Mr. Maverick, I cannot stay—"

"It would only take a single minute, parson, for you to dismount and look over the edge of the cliff. I will hold your horse."

"God forbid!" The exclamation was uttered

with a very marked agitation of voice and a trembling of hands and face, not a tone nor a motion of which escaped the watchful Maverick.

"Excuse me, sir," the clergyman continued. "This melancholy subject seems to have a strange fascination for you; I frankly confess that it is too unpleasant to me to bear more than a passing reference. You may understand why this should be so; but if you heard none of the gossip which connected the name of Horace Levin with that of Helen Westcott before my marriage—I say if you have heard none of this, then you cannot understand why this subject is extremely painful to me. I must decline to converse any further about it; and as we are near the corner where you will turn off to reach Maverick House, I will bid you good-evening now. I do not wish to be ungracious, sir; I shall be happy to call upon you soon, and renew your acquaintance under more favorable auspices. Good-evening, sir!"

He chirruped to his horse, and the animal, which had been standing as though fastened into the road during this colloquy, resumed his jog-trot. Maverick gave his own horse the rein, and two bounds brought him beside the other. A shadow crept over the clergyman's face; then a faint spot of red showed upon his cheek, and he looked at his tormentor with impatient inquiry. They had now reached the corner of which Mr. Roesselle had just spoken; but Maverick made no motion to turn off. He kept his eyes fixed upon the clergyman's face, coolly, deliberately, evidently with a purpose.

"I suppose I have heard all the gossip you refer to," he said. "I suppose there is no doubt that the lady whom you married, and Horace Levin, were once engaged—or something very near to it. What of it? I fail to see why that circumstance should make you so averse to the mere mention of the place where poor Levin met his end."

The minister's pale face was in an instant flooded with a rush of indignant blood. His hands trembled with excitement so that they could hardly hold the reins; he strove to speak out an indignant protest against this continual impertinence, but he was tongue-tied with the force of his emotions. They rode past the turning, but Maverick still kept his horse by the side of the other.

"Well, parson," he said, with cool bluntness, "no matter now. We'll dismiss the subject, for the present, at least. You spoke

about calling on me at some time not far distant; but the fact is, I have some business that is pressing, and I can't wait for your call. I'll go home with you to-night, if you please."

The clergyman looked uneasily at the speaker.

"I pray you defer your call till to-morrow," he said. "I am weary, and somewhat nervous. I am hardly fit to converse at all."

"I must see you to-night," was the peremptory reply. "My business is brief, and must be done now."

"Then speak it here," was the last desperate appeal of the clergyman, shrinking from the proposition as he shrank from the man. "Excuse me, sir, but I would rather choose the time when you are to come to my humble parsonage. Tell me now and here how I can serve you."

The answer was quick and stern, and admitted of no denial.

"You see it is getting toward evening, parson, and any of these obscure places along this road which we are passing may hold an eavesdropper. What I have to say to you must be said in secret; what you have to promise me must be promised in secret."

They rode on in silence, and soon the gathering twilight hid their faces. Tormented by the strange persistency of Maverick in forcing this disagreeable subject upon him, and believing from his sinister appearance and address that his forced visit boded no good to him, the clergyman rode on, glad at last that he had an opportunity in the obscurity of the hour to compose himself for the coming interview. After riding some distance further, they turned down a lane which led to the parsonage. Daylight had gone when they reached it, so that they could not see the steep roof of Maverick House above the trees, a mile and a half away across the fields.

They dismounted, and Maverick tied his horse.

"Go and put your animal up," he said, to the other; "I will wait here for you."

The clergyman returned in a few minutes, and found Maverick sitting on the steps, but in the shade of the pillars, so that the lamplight from the house could not reach him.

"Take me directly to your study," he said. "Acquaint no one with my presence here."

His tone was that of command. Mr. Roesselle silently led the way through the hall, and was about to open the second door on the left, when the door opposite was flung

open, and the apparition of a lovely young creature in a white muslin dress burst out of the sitting-room upon them. Her arms were about her husband's neck in an instant.

"Why, you naughty Alvin!" she exclaimed. "You are trying to get into the house without letting me know you are here. But my ears are too quick, sir; I heard you, and I—"

The strange expression of the face into which she was looking told her as plainly as words could have spoken it that there was another present; she turned her head and saw Augustus Maverick looking at her. She dropped her arms and retired a few steps, and her husband said:

"This gentleman has a little business with me in the study, Helen, dear. But I will be with you in a few moments."

She hid her confusion by an immediate escape into the dining-room, and the two men passed into the study. It was a small room, filled with Mr. Roesselle's books and desk, and on a small table a lamp was burning faintly. The clergyman raised the wick enough to make a bright light, and handing his visitor one of the two armchairs, sat down in the other. Without a word he leaned his face on his hand, and looked inquiringly at Maverick. The latter seemed in no hurry to be seated. He stood by the chair, his fingers drumming on the back, and carelessly said:

"Mrs. Roesselle is a charming woman."

There was no answer; the clergyman was looking at him to ascertain what the remark might mean.

"You have been married about three months, I believe," was spoken, in the same careless tone.

"More, But, Mr. Maverick, I beg to remind you that you are here against my expressed wish, on your own invitation, for the purpose of transacting some business with me. Is it too much to ask that you will confine yourself to that business?"

Maverick stepped to the door without a word, opened it, and looked into the hall. Then he closed it, turned the key, and took his seat in the chair directly in front of the clergyman, and so near that their knees touched.

"I merely wish to ensure secrecy," he said. The other did not speak—it may be that he could not command his voice—but motioned him to continue.

"I must tell you candidly, parson, in the beginning, that what I have to say relates

entirely, in the first instance, to the death of Horace Levin."

Mr. Roesselle almost sprang from his chair; the blood rushed angrily into his face again, and he had commenced to utter a protest, when Maverick with a strong hand on either shoulder forced him back into the chair, and continued to talk, so rapidly that the other could not interrupt him.

"You need not say a word, sir; not a word. I know all you would say. The subject is unpleasant to you, I am aware; but I cannot help that. You must hear me; if a stronger word is necessary, then I will say, you *shall* hear me. Parson Roesselle, you know that the verdict of the coroner's jury declared that Horace Levin came to his death by his own act. Do you know of any person who dissents from their conclusions, and doubts the correctness of that inquest? You need not answer; I see by your face, that you would tell me that you are surprised that I should suggest any such doubt. Ah sir, let me tell you further, not only do I suggest the doubt, but I have ever believed, and do now believe, that Horace Levin did not die the death of a suicide."

The clergyman started again, and exclaimed, "How could it be otherwise? How—"

"Look at the circumstances," Maverick continued, again forcing him to sit down. "A man is found dead at the foot of a tall cliff, and we will allow that he must have fallen from the top of it, since the marks on his body seem to show it, and since he was seen in the vicinity of the bank above but a few hours previous. He had been disappointed in love—excuse the mention of the well-known fact, sir, but it is necessary; and that, say the jury and the people, is cause enough for the act. Bah, bah!—we all know better. Such things don't happen in America, except in story-books. You are much such a man as was your dead rival, Mr. Roesselle; now would you have killed yourself had you been the disappointed one? Assuredly not; you would laugh at the idea now, if you were not so very sober. But they say that his watch and the picture of his former sweetheart were found carefully put away, and of course by his own hand, at the place of his death, and therefore it must have been a premeditated self-murder. Pish, pish!—that is worse reasoning still. As though a man on the very brink of eternity should think of trinkets or love-tokens! Don't you see the absurdity of the thing? Now, Mr. Parson, I can easily

imagine a way in which this youth may have come to his end. He would not take off the keepsakes that he prized if he was about to kill himself; but I have known young fellows to do just that before a personal conflict. Upon my soul, sir, I believe that there is at least one man alive who can tell the truth about Levin's death; because I think he died in a struggle on the top of that bank. Why could not the fools who examined the spot see that there were footmarks stamped into the ground by *two* pair of boots? Why could they not see that some of the heel-marks showed the print of nail-heads all around the heel, and others had no such marks? I looked for myself, and I found so much with no trouble at all."

The speaker purposely paused, to observe closely the effect that his words produced upon the clergyman. The latter sat nervously working his fingers on the arms of his chair, profoundly agitated, and striving to interrupt the flow of the other's talk. As soon as an opportunity was given him, he exclaimed:

"You talk of this subject in defiance of me; I have told you that it is deeply painful, I have begged you to desist; you will not. If, then, I am compelled to hear what you *will* say, for the sake of my feelings, already pained almost beyond endurance—for my sake, sir, be brief and rapid."

"I want to know what you think of my reasoning—of my conclusion?" Maverick bluntly said.

"I do not wish to converse at all on this topic," was the instant reply. "But if you will have my opinion, I merely say that both your reasoning and your conclusion are absurd, for reasons that I need not state."

"And you think the inquest was right?"

"I think it folly to doubt it. But I am not interested in your groundless suspicions, and I am not the proper person to receive them. I am a minister of the gospel, not an officer of the law."

"Perhaps I may go to a magistrate at Tarrytown with my suspicions," returned Maverick, in a slow and measured tone. "Whether I do or not depends very much on you, Mr. Roesselle."

"Upon me?"

"Upon you. For look you, sir—although you may still pretend that the relation which the lady whom you married once maintained with the man of whom we speak does not and should not interest you to discover all that can be known about the death of

that man—I think otherwise, and I am bound to tell you all I know of that affair. A moment since you heard me say that I believed there was at least one man alive who could tell all about Horace Levin's death; but I can say more than that. I can say with truth, I do say, that there are two men alive who know all about it. And I am one of the two."

"What do you mean?" Roesselle faintly asked.

"I will tell you; and after I have told you, I want you to tell me whether I had better go to Tarrytown and lay my information before the authorities. You see, sir, I insist that you ought to feel an interest in this strange affair, and I insist that the relation in which your wife once stood with this man who is dead, gives me the right to demand your advice. And are not you the clergyman who read the burial service over the corpse? What could be more proper than that you should advise me in this juncture?"

A nervous, impatient motion of the minister's hand told Maverick to go on. He continued, speaking slowly and in a low tone:

"The inquest declared that Levin came to his death on the night of the 17th, or the morning of the 18th of April, 1830. It was, in fact, on the night of the 17th, about nine o'clock. I know the time, because *I was there*, and saw the deed! It was a clear moonlight night, and I had been—no matter where I had been;" and the speaker bit his lip as he remembered that it was the night of his first visit to Augusta Traynor's cottage. "I was riding up the road, when my attention was attracted to a saddle-horse that was tied among some bushes between the road and the bank, and I rode over to see what it meant. I reached the bushes, and thought no more of the horse, for, as I sat in my saddle I looked over their tops, and I saw a scene of which I was the only witness. Two men stood face to face a few feet apart, very near the brow of the cliff, and not more than two rods from me. The light of the moon was strong, and I at once recognized the one farthest from me as Horace Levin. The nearer of the two I did not know immediately; but within the next minute I saw his face and heard his voice, and then I knew him. I sat silently, and neither of them saw me, or had any intimation of my presence.

As I looked, I saw Levin take off his watch and chain and hang them on a bramble, and lay something beside it which he took from his pocket. Then he came toward the other, and shook his fist menacingly in his face. 'I believe you've lied about me,' he said, almost choked with anger. 'Nothing but lies would have done that business.' 'I have not lied about you,' the other replied. 'You have—you have—and you lie when you deny it!' raged Levin. 'You will be ashamed of this, some day,' the other calmly rejoined. 'I'll make you ashamed of your conduct now,' was the next; and Levin shook his fist directly in the other's face. 'There's bad blood between us; I'll fight you now,' Levin cried. 'I have no bad blood with you, and I certainly will not fight,' was the reply. 'Ho, ho! A coward as well as a sneak!' the excited man sneered; and with the words he struck the other a violent blow upon the chest. It staggered him back; but when he recovered his breath and his feet, he had lost all control of himself. He rushed upon Levin like a wild beast, seized him with a strength far beyond his appearance, and hurled him to the ground. Horace Levin fell within a foot of the edge of the cliff, and with the force of the shock that had impelled him there not spent, he rolled over! He threw up his hands and caught some shrubs that grew over the edge, but they yielded, and he disappeared down the cliff. His antagonist ran to the edge, knelt down, and looked over; and when I retired, as silent and unperceived as I came, he was in the same position."

The horror of this revelation bristled in every hair, and distorted every lineament of the listener.

"What!" he gasped, "do you mean that Levin—was—was—"

"Murdered? Yes."

"And you saw it?"

"I saw it."

There was a pause. Roesselle seemed about to ask another question, but his tongue refused him utterance. Augustus Maverick continued:

"I saw it, and I recognized the murderer."

He bent forward, and grasping the arm of the clergyman, he lowered his voice to a thrilling whisper, and pronounced the words:

"And you are the man."

THE UPPER CRUST.

BY CHARLES P. ILSLEY.

CHAPTER I.

"Isn't he splendid?"

This was the exclamation of Miss Trafton to her friend Miss Canby, at the conclusion of a round dance, as her partner, bowing his acknowledgments, was moving away. The remark was made *sotto voce*, yet in tones sufficiently audible to reach his ears, if the young gentleman possessed ordinary quickness of hearing. And perhaps that was the intention of the speaker.

"Perfectly splendid! he waltzes divinely!" was the enthusiastic response of Miss Canby, her eye following the retreating object of her admiring remark.

"He has engaged me for the German; isn't that nice?" continued Miss Trafton, tone and manner evincing gratified triumph.

"And I am engaged to that stupid Campbell!" rejoined Miss Canby, in a querulous dissatisfied voice.

"Why, Bessie, I thought he was a favorite of yours!" remarked her companion.

"O, he's endurable, but not a particular favorite! Still, he's vastly superior to the sticks of which the senior class is generally composed this term. But then Auguste Beaumont and James Campbell, compare the two!" was Miss Canby's pointed rejoinder.

"Hyperion to a satyr!" laughingly remarked Miss Trafton.

"I hope that you will not be selfish, Lizzie, and monopolize him for the entire evening. Do, pray, be a little generous, and give your friends a chance."

"The field is open to all," was Miss Trafton's bantering reply. "One must work to win; and to the victor belong the spoils!"

It was at a social hop that the above conversation took place, in the academic city of Campont. These hops the *elite* of Campont managed occasionally to get up; that is, when they could muster the requisite number of college and law students who were deemed "passable" by "Our Set," as it was styled, which was composed solely of those who moved in the "first circles." It was mainly on this class that Our Set were dependent for their saltatory and musical reunions, the number of young men belonging to the place being very limited. We mean,

of course, *eligible* young men; and these you could count on your fingers.

It may not have fallen under the notice of the general reader, but the fact seems pretty well established, that in those places where a college is located, the resident young ladies are more likely to be doomed to a life of single blessedness than their sisters in other towns. One would think that the reverse would be the case, considering the number of young men who flock to these seats of learning. But it has passed into a proverb, that college-town girls are fore-ordained to "dance in the brass kettle."

Undoubtedly there is considerable flirtation carried on in these places, and more than the usual number of engagements entered into; but the mischief is, that the former is pretty sure to end with term time, and the latter are seldom apt to "stick." Now in this respect Campont is not an exception to the general rule. We do not mean to assert that *all* the young ladies of Campont are given to flirting, heaven forbid! nor that they are more liable to spend their lives "in maiden meditation fancy free," than the sisterhood in less or more favored places. Our remarks are confined to a particular class or clique: briefly, to Our Set—for who but they are of sufficient importance to be the subject of remark?

Such being the condition of affairs in Campont, it is not to be wondered at that there existed no small rivalry among the clique alluded to, to render themselves as attractive as possible, and to win individually the attention of those of the other sex who had *entree* to the charmed circle.

This rivalry, to be sure, was cunningly veiled, and there was no glaringly apparent attempt at what one might call proselyting, but he must be an obtuse observer who failed to detect the little manœuvres resorted to, in order to induce every innocent fish newly arrived in their waters to take to the hook so dexterously thrown to it.

Auguste Beaumont was the trout on whom Miss Trafton now exerted her piscatory skill. She had been unfortunate in her last throw, and signally failed in bringing the prey to land. But that served to stimulate rather

than dampen her ardor, and it really seemed as if at this time success would crown her efforts.

Young Beaumont, on whom her angling skill was now employed, was a member of the senior class. He was a very "nobby" gentleman. From his hat to his boots his whole attire was perfect, every article in strict conformity to the latest style. He had a fine figure, to which his garments fitted as if they were part and parcel of his person. His well-cut features, if not remarkably expressive, were decidedly handsome. He was very glib with his tongue, and if his remarks were not particularly brilliant, he possessed that agreeable gift of small talk, which had more weight with those among whom he dispensed it, than if his lips dropped oracles. In addition to his other accomplishments, he had a fine voice, and sung with much taste; and above all, he was an exquisitely graceful dancer.

To sum up all in two words, Beaumont was decidedly a "ladies' man." Being such, and also being petted to the top of his bent, it was not the least strange, considering his mental calibre, that the young man should, to use a certain phrase, "put on airs"—should plume himself on the enviable position to which he had attained. Among his fellows, there was a dash of superciliousness about him that prevented his being a favorite, and yet it was not so offensive as to create decided hostility. He was to many an object of envy, but with the more wise his conduct only provoked smiles.

How he obtained footing among the elect we have no means of knowing. Very likely he was indebted to his good looks; for appearances go a great way in the world. Through his good offices he had obtained for his chum, James Campbell, the same privileges and immunities, such as they were, that he enjoyed. Now Campbell lacked many of those extrinsic qualities for which his roommate was so distinguished. There was nothing of the fop about him, either in his dress or address. Neither was he handsome; and yet he was not by any means a bad looking fellow. He had a good sensible countenance, and if his features were not so well drawn as Beaumont's, they were stamped with character. He dressed neatly, sensibly, but not in the least finically.

It was to the manners rather than the man himself that Miss Canby applied her disparaging remark. He was "stupid" be-

cause he was not so graceful in the dance as the accomplished Beaumont; because he was not *au fait* in all those trifling attentions which are so pleasing to the fair sex; and because he had not that easy address which seemed so natural to Beaumont. Moreover, he was not an adept in that agreeable *badinage* which forms the staple of fashionable discourse. He had an abundant store of bullion on which to draw, but he lacked the small change which passes so current in society. And here was the difference between him and his chum: Beaumont dealt only in small change, and nickels at that.

On the evening of the hop Campbell was guilty of a sad *contretemps*. He was conversing with Miss Canby, when a lady passing at the time happened to attract his attention, and he innocently inquired of his companion, if she was acquainted with Miss Callender of the Haven, or "Port," as it is usually called, remarking that the lady who had just passed them bore a striking resemblance to her.

"My acquaintance in that part of the city is very limited, and I have not the honor of the lady's in question," was the reply.

The young man was somewhat taken aback by the haughty manner and slightly contemptuous tone of the speaker. However, he ventured to remark:

"She is a very lovely girl, I understand, in character as well as in person. I am told, also, that she possesses a fine intellect."

"Her father keeps a grocery, or something of that sort, I believe," responded the lady, with increased hauteur.

"No, he was once in mercantile business, I believe," said Campbell, wondering what this had to do with the daughter's beauty and intellect, "but he retired some time since."

"His daughter, I am told, was once a teacher in a public school; but I know very little concerning her," said Miss Canby, her tone and manner too plainly evincing that the subject was distasteful to her. "Excuse me, Mr. Campbell," she added, seeing the gentleman about to continue the conversation, "I see Miss Trafton beckoning me." And thereupon she took her departure.

A covert smile played over the young man's features, for just then it occurred to him that he had forgotten the sacred precincts within which he stood, and that he had committed a grave offence, in the mere

supposition that his late companion could, by any possibility, be an acquaintance or associate of a lady whose social position was so far beneath her own.

"A grocer's daughter! a school-teacher!" sniffed Miss Canby, as she sought her friend. "The fellow is more stupid than I took him to be, to suppose that I associated with persons of that class!"

CHAPTER II.

"I BELIEVE I made a Judy of myself last evening," laughingly remarked Campbell, as he sat in his room the following morning, "talking over," the hop with his chum. And he related his conversation with Miss Canby.

"Wh-e-w!" whistled Beaumont. "You put your foot in it, and no mistake! Why, my dear fellow, aren't you aware, that, save a few in the fashionable quarter, the ladies of the Port are wholly ignored by Miss Canby and her set?"

"So I was very soon given to understand last evening," said Campbell. "Nevertheless, I was determined to say a good word for the Port ladies, be the consequences what they might."

"That will never do, James, my boy; that is, if you would stand well in the books of those we met last evening."

"I would very much like to know the antecedents of some of that set," remarked Campbell. "Miss Canby's, for instance: whence did she spring? on what grounds does she claim superiority over the others? Is it birth, intellect, or mere wealth?"

"Poh, man! give antecedents the go-by," said Beaumont. "The past is a sealed book. It is not politic to pry too curiously into its contents."

"I can enlighten you as to Miss Canby's," said a student, who chanced to be present. "I got my information from old Blab, the 'walking encyclopedist,' as the boys call him. He knows the genealogy of every man, woman and child in Campont, I believe, and nothing delights him more than to retail out scraps of their history."

"Well, what does he say of the Canbys?" asked Campbell.

"Why, that the father of Miss Canby was a wholesale dealer in fish, by which he made heaps of money. His father before him used to peddle fish in the metropolis. Blab says he has often seen him trundling a wheel-

barrow through the streets shouting lustily, 'Here's your fresh cod and mackerel!'"

"Faith, Shirley, that is too steep!" said Beaumont, in a credulous tone.

"It is true as the book, so Blab says. It seems that the old man died before his son had made much headway in the world. The latter, he said, commenced his career in a small fishstall on one of the wharves, and by strict perseverance in business worked his way up to a wholesale dealer."

"Which was certainly to his credit," incidentally remarked Campbell.

"Of course it was; every one who is successful wins credit. It is only your poor unfortunate devil who lacks merit. Well, when he died he left a handsome plum to his widow and children. His widow soon after removed from the metropolis, and finally settled down here in Campont. Having built a fine villa, the fishmonger's wife was at once admitted to the innermost sanctuary of the elite, and Miss Betsy—'Bessie' as she writes it—turns up her aristocratic nose at the grocer's daughter and school-teacher!" And a laugh of derision burst from the speaker, as he closed his account.

"You are inclined to be cynical this morning," said Beaumont, with a smile.

"Not in the least," Shirley replied. "But by the by, Beaumont, I fancy if that 'sealed book' of which you spoke just now, were to be opened and read to the world, many a head now arrogantly held on high would be bowed low in shame."

"Why bowed in shame?" asked Campbell. "Because their progenitors, near or remote, were poor, or pursued a humble calling, is that anything to their discredit—anything to cause a blush? If wealth is the touchstone, how many of us in turning back will not find, here and there, a progenitor at the very lowest rung of the ladder? On his own merits a man should stand or fall; what he is, not what his father was, should be the test-rule."

"Those are my sentiments, Campbell," said Beaumont, who evidently was much interested in the remark.

"I say, also," continued Campbell, "that he who is ashamed of his father because he is or was poor, or because his calling was lowly, lacks the element of true manhood. He is both weak and cowardly."

"Good on your head, Campbell!" said Shirley, with boyish glee. "Gad, if the Canbys could only hear you! But be care-

ful how you ventilate such sentiments, or you will lose caste. You will find that they will not go down with Our Set. Such homely truths don't suit them, eh, Beaumont?"

A slight color mounted the cheeks of the one appealed to, but he parried the question with a light laugh.

"If I have not already lost caste, as you put it, Shirley," said Campbell, "I probably soon shall. I propose to take Miss Callender to the concert next week, provided she will accept my invitation."

"A clear case of insanity!" laughed Shirley. "What, prefer a school-mistress to one of the elect? The whole set will be down on you, rely upon it. You will have committed the unpardonable sin, and if you are determined on your mad purpose, your doom is assuredly written!"

"So be it," said Campbell. "I am a willing martyr. I cheerfully accept the situation."

"Then, farewell, a long farewell to all thy greatness!" exclaimed Shirley, in mock-heroic tones, as he turned and left the room.

The concert mentioned by Campbell was to be one of a number occasionally gotten up by the *elite*, ostensibly for some charitable object, but mainly, so Shirley insisted, to afford those who took part in them an opportunity to exhibit their accomplishments. But then all of Shirley's remarks in regard to Our Set should be taken *cum grano salis*. He was avowedly "down on them," to use his own expression. They had once turned the cold shoulder upon him, and he never missed a chance to hold them up to ridicule.

These concerts were intended to be very exclusive, wholly so on the part of the performers, and as much as possible in respect to the audience. To insure the latter, the tickets were put at a high price, so as to deter the commonalty from attending, and the plan proved admirably effective. Shirley attended one of them, and his only comment on the affair was, that if he had given but twenty-five cents admittance fee he should have paid too dear for his whistle.

"You were joking, Campbell," said Beaumont, when the two were left together; "you do not seriously think of taking Miss Callender to the concert?"

"Certainly I do, if she will accompany me; why not, pray?"

"O, it will look so odd, you know. She does not move in the same circle with the girls of your acquaintance, and I am very

sure it will occasion remark. By the way, when did you make her acquaintance?"

"I was introduced to her last class-day. I was struck with her appearance then; I do not mean merely by her beauty, which you must confess, Beaumont, is of a high character, but by her manners, her conversation and superior intelligence; and the impression then made has deepened on acquaintance."

"I will acknowledge that she is beautiful, and I dare say is accomplished, and all that; but then consider her position," urged Beaumont.

"Her position?—very good," quickly replied Campbell. "In what respect, pray tell me, is it inferior to—say Miss Canby's? Her father may not be so wealthy as Miss Canby's father was said to be—that I know nothing about—but her family is highly respectable, and she possesses rare accomplishments, scholarly and graceful; and what more would you have? Can Miss Canby, or Miss Trafton, or any of that clique, boast of more, or as much?"

"Pshaw; you know what I mean, Campbell; she may be the very paragon of her sex, but she does not—" Beaumont hesitated, and Campbell completed the sentence:

"Possess the 'Open Sesame' to Our Set, that is what you were going to say, is it not?" he asked.

"Well—yes—that is about the substance of it," replied Beaumont, pleased to be relieved of his difficulty.

"Truly the young lady is to be commiserated under her great misfortune!" ironically remarked Campbell. "Understand me, Beaumont," he continued, "I do not inveigh against class distinctions. They always did and always will exist, and it is well that they should. People are drawn together by neighborly proximity, by similarity of tastes and pursuits, by a reciprocity of courtesies, and then they unite in classes or circles. This is very desirable and as it should be. What I object to is this: that this or that little commonwealth should set itself up a social hierarchy, and rank all who are without its pale as graceless sinners."

"Of course that would be wholly wrong and unjust," said Beaumont.

"But is it not precisely that wrong and that injustice of which Our Set is guilty?" pointedly asked Campbell.

"I will not attempt to argue with you," said Beaumont, not unwilling to shirk the

point. "We must take the world as we find it, and my aim is to make the most of it. I was never made for a reformer; martyrdom is not my *forte*."

"I should judge not," said Campbell, with a meaning smile, as he resumed the studies the conversation had interrupted.

The reader has some insight of Campbell's character. It was a sterling one. He was a conscientious student, and gave promise of becoming a ripe scholar. Of wealthy parentage and enjoying a liberal allowance, he yet practised a prudential economy, without being niggardly in his expenditures. There was nothing like "flash" about him. His rooms in college were furnished with everything that could conduce to comfort, but there was an absence of that meretricious display which some rich men's sons, undergraduates, are fond of exhibiting. He was strictly correct in his habits, and his thoughts were pure and cleanly. From those foibles too common to collegians, and which are charitably ascribed to the effervescence of youth, he was notably free. And yet he was not one of your staid musty fellows who stalk about with owl-like gravity. His disposition was eminently genial. He was very fond of athletic sports. In the gymnasium, with the bat or the oar, not one went before him. No one enjoyed a "good time" more than he; but those in which he indulged were not misnomers; they left no sting of regret to mar their recollection. When we add that he was a general favorite in college, we need say no more.

Knowing him as we do, it may seem strange that Campbell should have selected Beaumont as his roommate. But then how common it is for characters widely dissimilar to be brought into close relationship. They formed an acquaintance while freshmen, which had continued unbroken. There was not a strong affinity between them. It was just powerful enough to keep them on good terms with each other. Notwithstanding his foppery, Beaumont had many good points about him. In his disposition he was agreeable and accommodating. If he was not a painstaking student, he was no fool. He would never make his mark as a scholar, but he had that tact which makes its way in the world; which enables its possessor to advance boldly in paths in which mere talent would shrink and falter.

CHAPTER III.

JANE CALLENDER—not "Jennie," she would not permit her friends to use the diminutive—merited more than the encomiums of Campbell. She was indeed eminently lovely. Hers was a beauty that palls not on the sight—an ever-renewing beauty. In every newborn smile, in every changing expression of her features, there was a fresh revelation. We will not attempt her portrait. There is a style of beauty easily portrayed, and there is a style that defies the cunningest attempts of the artist. Of this last type was Jane Callender's. And the lovely casket contained a jewel worthy of its rare casing.

We do not believe that the man or woman lives, who is ignorant of his or her own good looks, or who does not secretly pride him or herself on them. And why should they not, as on any beautiful thing belonging to them? The evil is, that this pride, proper in itself, is apt to degenerate into silly vanity; and when this happens—how rarely that it does not!—the subtle charm is broken, and that which awoke our reverent admiration excites something nearly akin to disgust.

If Jane Callender ever looked into her mirror—was there ever a lady who did not?—or interpreted correctly the glances she received, she must have known that she possessed more than ordinary personal charms, and yet never by the slightest manifestation did she evince that she was aware of the fact. Averse to display, her dress was simplicity itself, and it appeared to be her study to avoid observation. She was decidedly what is called a "home body," and it was only in the domestic circle that the perfection of her charms was fully revealed.

Campbell's acquaintance with Miss Callender might and probably would have terminated with his first interview with her on class-day; but it happened one evening as he was returning from the metropolis to Campont, he noticed a young lady in the car closely veiled, who seemed much distressed at the persistent attentions of two young men, the only other passengers, whom Campbell at once recognized as students in the junior class of the university. They had evidently been drinking freely. Campbell kept his eye on them, and as at last the lady seemed about appealing to him for protection, he left his seat and approached them:

"You are annoying this lady," he said,

sternly, to one of the party, who had been the most obnoxious.

"Is that any of your business?" the young man replied in an insolent tone, still persisting in his incivilities.

"I will make it my business!" was Campbell's quick reply, and seizing the fellow by the collar of his coat, he lifted him bodily from his seat and transferred him to the other end of the car.

"Sit there!" he said in an indignant tone, as he thrust him into a seat. "And if you dare to renew your insults to that lady, mark my word! I will pitch you from the car! And you, sir," turning to the other, "shall follow suit!"

As if satisfied with the prowess already exhibited, the students at once succumbed, venting their impotent wrath in muttered threats, which they took good care should not reach the ears of Campbell.

As the latter turned to resume his seat, the lady said, "I thank you, Mr. Campbell," at the same time putting aside her veil.

"Miss Callender!" was the young man's surprised exclamation as he took a seat by her side. "I am very happy in rendering to you even so slight a service."

After again expressing her gratitude, the lady informed him she had been to the metropolis to attend a concert, and that her lady friends residing there had attended her to the car office. It was very common, she said, for the ladies of Campont to return without an escort, but after that night's experience, she thought she should not again make the venture without a protector. The car at that moment stopping, as she was on the point of leaving, Campbell begged leave to accompany her home.

From that evening his acquaintance with Miss Callender was more closely kept up, and was fast ripening into a friendly intimacy at the time of their introduction to the reader.

In pursuance of his avowed intention, Campbell invited the young lady to the proposed concert. Miss Callender hesitated about accepting the invitation. She was well aware that it was a select affair, and, although advertised to the public, was intended to be exclusive; she knew that Campbell had the *entree* to the clique under whose auspices it was gotten up, and that her appearance at the concert in his company would be very likely to provoke remark. On this point she was particularly sensitive.

She shrank from becoming the subject of what her intuitions warned her, would be ill-natured comments. On the other hand, she disliked very much to disappoint Campbell, who strenuously urged her to attend; and then there was another motive, buried deep in her heart—hardly acknowledged by herself—that prompted a compliance with his wish.

She sought the advice of her mother. But Mrs. Callender was not in full sympathy with her daughter. She was a high-spirited woman, and looked back complacently on a long line of ancestry of respectable standing, and she had no patience with those exclusives—"aristocratic upstarts," she styled them—who arrogated a superiority to which they were not entitled. She knew the origin of many of them; knew that their boast of moving in the "first society" was based on the most glaring assumption, and it provoked her to think that she was looked down upon as one of the "common clogs;"—more especially that her daughter should be considered unworthy the companionship of such flighty things as the Gates, Canby and Trafton girls.

Miss Callender did not share in her mother's feelings. She had not the slightest ambition to be considered as belonging to the "first circle," but was well content to be ranked among the lower classes. As for the Traftons, Canbys, and the like, she neither envied their position nor resented their pretensions; indeed, she rarely, if ever, bestowed a thought upon them. If the indulgence in their silly vanity afforded them any gratification, she was perfectly willing they should enjoy it. Her objection to attend the concert was not from a fear of encountering this clique, but simply, as we have stated, from unwillingness to become the subject of remark.

After some little delay Campbell received a rather reluctant acceptance to his invitation. He was not a little jubilant over it. Although admitted to Our Set, he had begun to feel a growing antagonism to it. Had he been a poor student, however high he might have ranked as a scholar, however unexceptionable his moral character, he well knew that its doors would have been barred against him. Therefore he estimated the privilege conferred upon him at its proper value.

He was jubilant over the acceptance, mainly, from a growing interest he felt

towards the young lady who had tendered it, and partly from a feeling akin to pride. You must know, what is potent to all in Campont, that whatever pretensions for distinction Our Set may advance, beauty is not among them; or if the claim be made, it is as shallow as the rest of their pretences. As a general thing its members are very showy, their toilets are elaborate, and when congregated they present quite a brilliant appearance. But mingle among them—take a Jenkins-like survey of their personal charms—and you will find but few traces of beauty, and those you do discover will lack the freshness and bloom so much prized. Now Campbell exulted in anticipation of the triumph awaiting his partner, when her pure unsullied loveliness should be brought in contrast with the faded and doubtful charms of the ladies just alluded to. Of course, for a “grave and reverend senior” to indulge in such pride was rather boyish, but very natural withal.

Well, the concert came off. The house was crowded. French, German and Italian songs were sung in the original languages, which were quite as well understood as if they had been rendered in English. Misses Trafton and Beaumont sustained the principal parts and were in their glory.

It was rather late when Campbell arrived, and he had to wander about before he found an eligible seat. His appearance with Miss Callender caused quite a sensation. Not a rude demonstration, to be sure, but there were turning and bobbing of heads here and there, and furtive whispers and glances among the crowd of exclusives. If Campbell noticed this, he took the affair very nonchalantly, gazing around upon the assembly in the most careless and independent manner. He *did* notice, however, and it brought a scornful smile to his lips, that he failed to catch the eye of any of Our Set, who adroitly managed not to recognize him.

On the whole the concert passed off well. Every piece was applauded to the echo. The performers and the audience were *en rapport*, and when this chances, everything works to a charm. The singers were pleased, the hearers were pleased, and all went home in a happy frame, voting the affair a perfect success.

On the whole, too, Miss Callender enjoyed the entertainment vastly more than she had anticipated. If the *elite* made her the subject of remark, they had the grace to keep

it to themselves. Whether the evening's gratification was enhanced by the long walk home after the concert, is a secret with which the reader has nothing to do, as the young lady herself scarcely ventured to attempt its solution.

CHAPTER IV.

“BULLY for you, Campbell!” was the boisterous exclamation of young Shirley, as he burst into the room of the former on the morning following the concert. “Didn't think you'd do it, but, egad, I glory in your spunk!”

“Do what?” asked Campbell, in surprise.

“Invested in a concert ticket last night,—rather a poor investment,” he added parenthetically, “and I saw you there with the Callender. Your appearance caused quite a fluttering among the snobs, let me tell you!”

“I was not aware of that,” remarked Campbell.

“Ah, but it did. I had my eyes on them. You should have seen the scornful toss of Miss Canby's head when she espied you! I came near laughing outright. Faith, it was as good as a play.”

“I hope she did not get a crick in the neck in consequence,” laughingly remarked Campbell.

“But, look here, James,” said Shirley, in a more serious tone,—“about your acquaintance with Miss Callender—do you know there are ugly stories floating around?”

“Ugly stories?—about me and Miss Callender?—I do not understand you,” was Campbell's astonished reply.

“Why, it is hinted that your intentions towards her are not exactly honorable, that is the substance of them.”

“Who dares breathe such a foul aspersion?” said Campbell, starting from his seat and speaking in an excited tone.

“Not I, for one, believe me; so banish that thunder cloud from your brow, if you please,” responded Shirley. “It is asserted by no one directly, but is whispered around generally. You know how these things circulate, by hints and innuendoes [rather than by open assertions.]”

“But the slander must have originated with some one: I would like to know the scoundrel.”

“I would not like to stand in his shoes,” laughed Shirley. “I thought it best that you should know that there was such a re-

port, but if I were you I should take no notice of it."

"That will depend on circumstances, as to how it is circulated, and who circulates it."

"These kind of stories, you know, are always current about collegians. If a student makes the acquaintance of a girl, especially if he manifests the least degree of interest in her, it is sufficient to set tongues wagging, and be sure the vilest of motives will be imputed to him."

"That is very true, Shirley," said Campbell, with more equanimity, as he resumed his seat.

"We have a set of graceless scamps among us," continued Shirley, "who would not stick at anything dishonorable. These fellows are taken as samples of us all. Outsiders thrust us all in the same bag, and the few infected sheep taint the whole flock. So that it has come to pass, you see, that if any of us show any attention to a young lady, it is immediately said that it is from some dishonorable motive. No doubt such was the origin of this report."

"Very likely," remarked Campbell, "but I hope no one does me the injustice of giving it credence."

"No one whose opinion is entitled to respect. There are a few inherently corrupt, who may affect to believe it. They judge of others by themselves. You will not think hard of me, friend Campbell, for mentioning what I have."

"On the contrary, my dear fellow, I take it as very kindly in you."

"I thought it was best that you should know it. I tell you what, Campbell—but stop, is Beaumont in there?" and Shirley pointed to a door opening into an adjoining room.

"No, he has gone to recitation."

"Well, then," he continued in a low voice, "between you and me, I should not be at all surprised, if the truth were known, that this story or insinuation had its origin among Our Set."

"No, no, Shirley, you are mistaken! no lady would imagine, much less intimate anything of the kind."

"Wouldn't, eh! you don't know them as well as I do. I grant you, no true lady would; but take my word for it, some of these double-refined, over-fastidious ones harbor thoughts that you and I little think of—ay, and give expression to them, too!"

"I am afraid your opinion is too much influenced by your prejudice, Shirley," was Campbell's quiet remark.

"Not in the least. If you had but seen that toss of Miss Canby's head, last night! There was a whole paragraph in it: 'Humph, that pert girl! I wonder what his object is? not a good one, I'll be bound!'—That is how I interpreted it in part."

"You incorrigible dog!" said Campbell, laughing heartily at the conceit; "you are determined to show no mercy."

"That mercy I to others show,
That others show to me."

That is not the way the couplet runs, but it will do. But, hist! here comes Beaumont and I'm off." And so saying he took his departure.

Campbell's reflections were anything but pleasant after his lively friend had left him. So far as the silly rumors concerned him he cared nothing. His character was too well established, he flattered himself, to be affected by them. Should he take any notice of them? Indeed, what notice could he take of them? They were of that nature, that the more one attempted to pry into them, to ferret out their author, the more likely were they to be augmented. He would adopt Shirley's advice and pass them by.

But then there was the lady; what would be their effect on her? Might they not possibly disturb the friendly relations that existed between them? He knew how sensitive she was on the subject, and he was apprehensive, if they reached her ears, an end would be put to an acquaintance which was every day assuming, on his part at least, a deeper and tenderer interest.

What course should he pursue? Should he speak to her on the subject? That he did not deem at all feasible. Should he cease visiting her? No, come what would, unless she expressed a wish to the contrary, he would continue his relations with her as heretofore. Perhaps the stories would die out, as such stories generally do after a brief currency; perhaps they were only current among the students, started in spite by the two young fellows he had encountered in the horse-car.

Although Campbell sought to comfort himself with these thoughts, he was still ill at ease. But as time passed away and he heard no more of the matter, he concluded that the rumor had blown over, and so gave

no more thought to the subject. As he detected no difference in the manner of Miss Callender when he met with or called on her, he was convinced that she was happily ignorant of that which had been to him such a source of trouble. But he was mistaken.

Weeks past by. The term was fast drawing to a close, and the members of the graduating class were looking forward with interest to and preparing for that, to them, all-important event, Commencement. The parts had been assigned. Campbell was to deliver the salutatory, Shirley the valedictory. Beaumont had a part low down on the list, from which, we may as well mention here, he managed to get excused.

During a call one evening on Miss Callender, a short time before class-day, Campbell observed a marked change in her demeanor. She had received and treated him with her usual cordiality, but she seemed to be laboring all the while under some secret embarrassment. Campbell could not divine the cause of this unwonted manifestation and puzzled himself in vain over it. At last her manners so plainly evinced that she had something which she desired but hesitated to communicate, that Campbell remarked with not a little curious interest:

"You have something you wish to say to me; what is it, Miss Callender?"

"Your surmise is correct," Miss C. replied with heightened embarrassment, "but the matter is of such a delicate nature that I hardly know how to introduce it." Then after a pause she added, "Will you please read this?"—and she placed in his hand an open note.

Campbell glanced his eye upon it. It was written in a lady's hand, which was evidently disguised. Its contents were as follows.

"The writer, as a friend, would caution Miss Callender to be guarded in her relations with Mr. Campbell, as reports are current seriously reflecting on his motives in seeking her acquaintance."

"How long have you had this note?" asked Campbell, after he had perused it, looking up with a slight flush on his face.

"I received it about three weeks since."

"You have no knowledge of who is the author?"

"None at all."

"You will pardon the question," said Campbell with unconcealed interest: "Has

this note wrought any change in your opinion as it regards myself?"

"It would take more than a contemptible anonymous note to do that, Mr. Campbell," was the quick reply, a warm blush suffusing the speaker's cheeks as she made the ingenuous confession.

"Thank you, Miss Callender!" said Campbell, in a highly gratified tone and with looks beaming with admiration. What more he would have said was cut short by the entrance of a visitor—the most *malapropos* event that could well have happened, the young man thought.

"I would like to take that note to my rooms," said Campbell, as he was taking his leave.

"You are perfectly welcome to it. Please destroy it when you have done with it," said the lady. "I should have done so after reading it, but I wished you to see it."

"I am afraid that the reception of this note," said Campbell, "will deter you from accepting the invitation to my little fete on class-day. It will be a great disappointment to me should it do so."

"I am happy, then," was the smiling reply, "to relieve your apprehensions. Had it not been for that note, I might have hesitated, but as it is, I accept your invitation with the greatest pleasure."

Campbell was the happiest fellow that entered the college grounds that night. The slanderous rumor that had threatened to interpose a barrier between him and one confessedly dear to him, had only served to draw them more closely together and to strengthen the bond that united them.

CHAPTER V.

"THERE cannot be a doubt about it!" was Campbell's exclamation, as he sat the next morning bending over his table, closely examining two notes that lay before him, one an invitation he had received a few weeks previous from Miss Canby to a social gathering, the other the anonymous note placed in his hands by Miss Callender. "And yet that one pretending to be a lady should be guilty of such an act!" As he spoke Shirley entered the room.

"What are you poring over, Most Illustrious?" was his first salutation.

"You are just the man I wanted, Shirley; come here and take a seat," said Campbell.

Although Shirley was full of his quips

and quirks, Campbell had great faith in him. There was a solid substratum underlying his erratic lightness. He was an indefatigable student, and ranked high in his class. He was of comparatively poor parentage, and during his collegiate course he employed his vacation in school-teaching, to eke out his limited means. It was on this account, he had reason to believe, that he had been snubbed by Our Set, and hence his hostility to the clique. Campbell knew that he could rely upon him, and therefore took him into his confidence.

"Read that," he said; and he handed him the anonymous note.

"Hum—um—I see; what next?" asked Shirley, after reading the document.

"I want to compare that note with this,"—touching the invitation. "You will notice in the first place that the paper is precisely alike, that the envelops correspond exactly in shape, in every way in fact. Now for the writing."

"I pride myself in being an expert in chi-rography," said Shirley; "let me examine it for a moment;" and he went over the two notes word by word.

"See here," he continued, after a careful scrutiny; "these C's at the commencement of your two names are precisely alike. Then look at the crossing of the t's, the same curved stroke in both notes; the f's all have the same heavy downward stroke, and all the s's have the same peculiar shape. If I were in a court of justice, I would swear that these two notes were written by the same person."

"That is the conclusion to which I had arrived before you came in. Although the hand is very well disguised, yet you detect at once the general similarity of the writing in the two notes. It struck me the moment I read the anonymous note that the writing was familiar to me."

"Well, this is a pretty go!" said Shirley, leaning back in his chair—he would use slang phrases. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing of myself. I shall make Miss Callender acquainted with the decision I have come to, and let her act her own pleasure. You, of course, will be silent in regard to this matter?"

"Have no fears on that account. But I say, Campbell, how did the lady feel in regard to the note?"

"She entrusted it to me; is not that suf-

ficient proof of her confidence?" Then, for the purpose of changing the subject, Campbell inquired of his visitor how he was getting along with his part, and so the conversation drifted on to matters pertaining to the coming Commencement.

A few evenings after this Campbell made another call on Miss Callender. What transpired before the subject of the anonymous note was introduced is wholly a matter of surmise. The young couple appeared to be on the best of terms, which would lead one to infer that some "understanding" had taken place between them.

When the subject of the note was brought up, and after Campbell had expressed his belief that Miss Canby was the author of it, Miss Callender remarked that from the first, although she could give no reason for it, she had suspected her.

"I did not destroy the note, but have brought it with me," remarked Campbell. "What do you propose to do with or about it?"

"You say that you have no doubt of her being the author of it?" asked the young lady.

"Not the slightest. My friend Shirley examined it thoroughly, and we compared it with a note I had from Miss Canby, and we are both firm in the conviction that they were written by the same hand."

"Then I'll tell you what I will do." And seating herself at a table she commenced writing on a sheet of note-paper.

"There!" she continued, with a light merry laugh, as she rose from the table, "how will that do?" And she passed the paper to Campbell.

"Capital, by Jove!" said Campbell, rubbing his hands with great glee, after he had read what she had written.

This is what the paper contained:

"Miss Callender begs leave to return Miss Canby's very friendly note. She is happy to assure her that the caution it conveyed was entirely unnecessary, as she was fully aware of the intentions of the gentleman in question prior to its reception."

After the note was placed in an envelop, sealed and directed, Campbell quizzically remarked:

"Are you aware of the significance of the language used in this note?" And he repeated the closing portion, emphasizing particular words, "She was *fully aware* of the

intentions of the gentleman prior to its reception."

"O," said Miss Callender, with an arch smile, "that is only the acknowledgment of a prescient knowledge, providentially bestowed upon us ladies!"

The laugh, if any, was on the lady's side.

Class-day at Campont College has thrown Commencement completely into the shade. By the old alumni, it is true, the latter is held in great reverence, and on its annual recurrence, gray-headed pilgrims from far and wide flock to *Alma Mater* and enjoy the feast of reason and fat things provided by the "benign mother," and sing pæans in her praise. But to the undergraduates, especially the seniors, Class-day is the day of the year, when each alumnus revels on the very summits of glory.

On the occasion referred to in our story a more than usually good time was anticipated. The greatest preparations were made for the event. Innumerable "Spreads" were announced by the knowing ones, the graduating class being unusually large. There were to be dancing on the green in the afternoon, the wonted services about the tree, the whole to be wound up with a grand open-air concert and promenade in the evening, while the college grounds were to be brilliantly illuminated with Chinese lanterns and gas jets.

Among the "Spreads," which form the leading feature of the day, it was whispered around that Campbell's and Beaumont's was to surpass any heretofore given, and all the ladies were on the *qui vive* for an invitation. Rumor was right; but though Campbell insisted that his chum should share with him the honor of giving the entertainment, he likewise insisted that the entire expense should be borne by himself. This was an arrangement, however, known only to themselves. Beaumont was given *carte-blanche* to invite whom he pleased.

The all-important day arrived. Beaumont had availed himself of the privilege accorded him, and scattered his invitations broadcast among the *elite*. Miss Canby had been sure that she should receive a special one from Campbell, but was doomed to be disappointed, and forced to avail herself of Beaumont's.

Now, although she had spoken slightly of Campbell, she had resolved in her heart, if it were a possible thing, to bring him to her feet. She would have preferred Beau-

mont, but it was plain to be seen that her friend Miss Trafton had secured that prize. She, therefore, bent all her wiles on Campbell. But of late she had noticed, much to her chagrin, a certain coolness in the gentleman's demeanor. He had grown remiss in his attentions, had slighted more than one of her invitations, in fact, had shown unmistakable indifference towards her. She sought to account for the change, and at last came to the correct conclusion, that a growing interest on his part for Miss Callender was the sole cause of it.

Refined lady as she pretended to be, moving in the boasted "first circles," to break up a connection which so militated against her selfish ends was now her study. What course should she pursue? Campbell's character for all probity and worth, where it was known, she knew was unimpeachable. But could she instil in the mind of Miss Callender a doubt of the purity of his intentions, she might accomplish her wishes. To this end she did not hesitate to descend to a most unladylike, nay, thoroughly despicable, act. What that act was has already been intimated to the reader.

The rooms of Campbell and Beaumont, thrown into one, resembled a temple of Flora. The table was under the supervision of a famous caterer from the metropolis, and the ladies had been prodigal in their floral offerings with which to decorate it and the rooms. A suite of chambers adjoining had been secured as withdrawing-rooms, and here, too, was the same lavish display of flowers.

The invited guests had begun to arrive, all in holiday attire. As Campbell stood at the entrance of — Hall, awaiting the arrival of his mother and sister, who were coming from their distant home to attend the festival, a party of ladies approached, among whom was Miss Trafton, Miss Canby, and others of that set; at the same time a waiter placed in the hands of Campbell, fresh from the greenhouse, a splendid bouquet, formed of the rarest and choicest flowers of the conservatory. An exclamation of delight burst from the ladies on catching sight of it.

"Was there ever anything so magnificent!" exclaimed Miss Canby, looking as if she would like to become the possessor of it. "Pray let me examine it." And she put out her hand as if to take it.

"Pardon me," said Campbell, still retaining the flowers, "I ordered these for the one

person dearest to me on earth, and into her hand only can I place them."

"And that is the one for whom you are waiting, your mother, of course," said Miss Canby, with a touch of disappointment in her tone that they were not intended for her.

"You are right, Miss Canby," said Campbell, with a meaning smile. "I do intend them for the one for whom I am waiting; and, by the by, I see her carriage entering the grounds."

There were many carriages passing to and fro, and the approach of the one indicated was slow. The party of ladies did not await its arrival, but, ushered by Beaumont, made their way to the drawing-room, and afterwards to the room where the "spread" was laid.

In the meantime the expected carriage drove up to the hall. Mrs. Campbell and her daughter, a lovely girl, first alighted, and then, with a face radiant with happiness, Campbell assisted Miss Callender from the vehicle, at the same time placing in her hands the coveted bouquet. Consigning his mother and sister to the care of Shirley, who was present by appointment, with Miss Callender on his arm, he led the way to the ante-room. After a little time given to the regulation of toilets, the party proceeded in the same order to the banqueting-room.

The room was thronged, and the sound of merry voices, mingled with light bursts of laughter, was heard from every side. But when Campbell and his little party entered the room and took the place reserved for them at the head of the table, his mother on one side of him, Miss Callender and his sister on the other, the former bearing his beautiful floral gift, there was an instant lush throughout the room. The situation was a trying one for Miss Callender, but she was equal to it. Never had she appeared so transcendently lovely, and never did woman bear herself with more queenly grace.

The silence was soon broken—the buzz and merry laugh resumed—but more than one smiling face there masked a heart rancorous with baffled pride, jealousy and scorn. But the hour was devoted to social mirth and good feeling, and if a perfect harmony did not exist among those present, it was not offensively apparent. Whatever coolness was exhibited towards Miss Callender by a portion of the company, was more than offset by the delicate and unremitting attentions of Mrs. Campbell and her daughter,

who seemed to fully comprehend how matters stood.

We have not the space to enter into a description of the entertainment. Let it suffice that it was pronounced a success, although if it had been more "select," it would doubtless have been regarded with more satisfaction by the chosen few.

After the affair was over, and the company had generally scattered to promenade the grounds, to listen to the music, and to view the dancers—albeit the "dance on the green" did not quite realize the descriptions given by the poets—as Campbell with his party were sauntering around the rooms, Shirley came in, and slapping him familiarly on the shoulder, said, in an animated voice:

"Campbell, you're a perfect — Pardon me, ladies!" he added, suddenly checking himself. "I believe I am a trifle excited. But that *entree*! I would not have missed it for a farm! O the daggers, the spears, the javelins I saw in some looks—a whole armory of them in the Canby's! Fortunate for you, Miss Callender, that looks do not kill, else we should be weeping over your sudden exit!"

After the laugh which greeted this sally had subsided, Campbell remarked to his *affiance*, for such we may now consider her, "I was very much surprised at the presence of Miss Canby. I did not think she would have the effrontery to appear, after receiving your note."

"To tell the truth, James," Miss Callender replied, "I have not yet sent it. I presumed that she desired to attend the spread, and not wishing to deprive her of the pleasure, I thought I would defer sending it until this affair was over."

"You have more consideration for her feelings, my dear, than she has shown for yours. I perhaps have the most reason to complain, for did she not seek to poison your mind against me, and thus create a breach between us?"

"But which resulted," was the low reply, while a charming blush mantled the face of the speaker, "in drawing us more closely together. For that reason," she added, "I charitably kept back the note, but it shall be despatched to-morrow."

As Miss Callender was toying with and admiring the bouquet presented to her by Campbell, he remarked:

"Are you aware of the significant part performed by those flowers to-day?"

"These flowers? In what way, pray?"

"I was standing at the hall-door, talking with some ladies, Miss Trafton and others, when a waiter brought me the bouquet. The moment Miss Canby saw it, she made a clutch at it. I would not permit her to take it, saying that I should place it only in the hand of the one being most dear to me. She at once concluded that it was for you, mother, and must have been mightily astonished when she saw who had received it. So you see, Jane," said Campbell, "that these flowers announced, to those ladies at least, on whom my affections were placed."

"I am glad that I was not aware of this at the first," said the lady. "Had I been, I should not have borne it so conspicuously."

"You wouldn't, eh? Permit me to doubt that," was the playful rejoinder of her companion.

CHAPTER VI.

"WELL, Beaumont," said Campbell, as they sat in their room the next morning, "our little affair seemed to pass off very pleasantly yesterday; I hope your ladies enjoyed it."

"Vastly, they were highly delighted with it," his chum responded. "By the way, Campbell, I suppose that I may venture to offer you my congratulations, as all the ladies seemed to consider it a 'settled thing,' between you and the lady down yonder."

"Yes, Beaumont, I will not affect to deny it, and I accept your kind wishes. I suppose that, in return, I may erelong offer you mine. Be honest now, old fellow?"

"Perhaps so," said Beaumont, slightly coloring. "There is no positive 'understanding,' as it is styled, between Miss Trafton and myself, no formal engagement, but I flatter myself that it requires but a demonstration on my part to bring about one."

"Then make it, and at once. If you really love the girl, and have reason to believe that your sentiments are reciprocated, make a sure thing of it before you leave Campont. Bring about this 'understanding' before you part with her. Take my advice, Beaumont, or rather follow the example I have set you. Believe me, my friend, I think it the wisest thing you could do."

"The course that you have taken," responded Beaumont, "is very well, as you are situated. Happily your future is provided for. With me it is different. I have got to fight my way through the world. I

may succeed—I may fail; and I do not think it right to link another's destiny with mine, not knowing whether I shall be the victor or the vanquished."

"You may be right, Beaumont; still, if I were you, I should do as I advise. If worst comes to worst, the compact can be cancelled."

Previous to this conversation Beaumont had never alluded to his pecuniary situation. He was always very reticent in respect to himself. His native place was far distant from Campbell's. All that the latter knew was, that it was an interior town in a neighboring State. Of his parentage he was wholly ignorant. Although he was rather extravagant in the matter of dress, yet from some things Campbell had observed, he was convinced that his means were limited. He had too much respect for his feelings, however, to make any inquiries into his private affairs or personal history. If Beaumont did not think proper to enlighten him on the subject, he would not court his confidence.

During the conversation, which was quite protracted, once or twice Beaumont seemed on the point of speaking of his parentage and past life, but from some reason or other he refrained. As Campbell had very little curiosity on the subject he did not encourage him to proceed.

That same forenoon several of the young ladies dropped into Miss Canby's to compare notes and talk over the proceedings of the previous day. The appearance of Miss Callender at the spread and the prominent position she occupied were fruitful themes of comment. Her looks, her dress, her manners, were subjected to the most searching criticism. She was overdressed, she was dowdyish, in fact her whole appearance gave evidence of her vulgar breeding. Miss Canby was the harshest in her remarks, and flipantly descanted—she, of all creatures in the world!—on the unladylike bearing of Miss Callender in this, that, and other particulars.

In the midst of her diatribe the postman came to the door, and a letter was placed in her hand. As her eye ran over it, a crimson blush dyed her brow, cheeks and neck, while an expression of shame, mortification and defeated malice swept over her features. Crushing the note in her hand with a muttered exclamation, she sought to turn the attention from her confusion and agitation by resuming the subject interrupted by the arrival of the letter.

Campbell was then hauled over the coals. They never fancied him. From the first he had given an impression of low breeding, and by his associating with that Port girl he gave unmistakable evidence of his *penchant* for low society.

"His father is said to be very wealthy," remarked one of the party.

"That may be," said Miss Trafton, "and still he may rank among the lower classes."

"Probably," said Miss Canby, "he is one of those Pennsylvanians who have grown suddenly rich in the oil business."

Had Shirley been present, he might have been tempted to whisper in the speaker's ear the impertinent query, "Fish oil?" But we must bring our report to a close, and leave the ladies in the enjoyment of their congenial enjoyment.

One week after Class-day came Commencement. The Commencement of to-day presents a striking contrast to the Commencement of olden times. Then, for weeks previous, it was the one theme of conversation. Then everybody was in busy preparation for the great event. Then, from afar and near, old and young, men, women and children, set their faces towards Campont. Then, for days before and after, the place presented a scene like an old-fashioned country muster. Then every available space was occupied by booths and tents, in which were all manner of shows and games. Then the roads diverging towards the metropolis, and even the city streets into which they run, were lined on each side with canvas shanties, wagons and wheelbarrows, from which were peddled all sorts of eatables and drinkables, pies, cakes, buns, boiled eggs, spruce beer, egg-nog and West-India rum.

But all this has passed away, like the "baseless fabric" of a dream. Now a few of the friends of the graduating class assemble to attend the exercises, and the past graduates gather about the old halls to renew the associations of their youth; but there is no outside stir and excitement. There is a little flurry when "His Excellency" appears on the grounds, which soon subsides. Then follow the procession to the church, the usual exercises of the occasion, after which there is another procession to the dining-hall, a few spectators looking on; and so ends the Commencement of modern times.

The Commencement of our story passed off without anything to distinguish it from preceding ones, save the unusually large

graduating class. The performance of the parts assigned might be placed under the usual heads of good, bad and indifferent. Campbell and Shirley acquitted themselves with marked ability, and really carried off the honors, notwithstanding a few others of the class received more flattering plaudits from a certain portion of the fair auditors. That evening, or the next morning, the bulk of the students hastened homeward, and Old Campont settled down to its wonted dull quietude.

Four years had passed away. Those we had left frolicsome Freshmen had arrived at the dignity and assumed the gravity of Seniors. Class-day had again come round, and the old scenes were reenacted. We have thought how these constant repetitions must pall on the Faculty. Yet with their annual recurrence they seem to enter upon them with ever renewed zest. Doubtless it is because they serve so admirably to break up the monotony of college life.

Seated in the chambers of one of the halls was a small party of ladies and gentlemen. They were the rooms once occupied by Campbell and Beaumont.

"It seems natural and homelike to be back in the old place again," said one of the gentlemen, as his eye glanced leisurely around the room. "By the way, Shirley, have you fallen in with any of the old clique in your wanderings?"

"Yes, Campbell, I saw the Traftons, Canbys, and others hurrying to one of the spreads, looking pretty much the same as of old, a little more *blase*, perhaps, but as 'killing' as ever."

"They are not married yet, then? I wonder how that affair of Beaumont and Trafton terminated."

"I have heard all about it—in part from your brother, Mrs. Campbell," said Shirley, turning to the lady sitting by the side of Campbell. "It appears that they were not formally engaged when the term closed, but it was generally considered a settled thing. They exchanged photographs, agreed to correspond, and all that sort of thing. So matters went on for some time, and it was said that the lady had commenced preparations for her wedding, when, from some cause, secret at first, she abandoned her preparations, and the whole thing suddenly fell through."

"Did you learn what that cause was?"

"Yes. It appears that Miss Trafton had taken Beaumont wholly on trust, knowing nothing of his antecedents. And by the way, Campbell, don't you remember Beaumont's remark one day when we were talking over some matters, 'Poh man!' said he, 'give antecedents the go-by.' I know I was struck with it at the time. Well, it seems he did not inform Miss Trafton of his. I wonder, with her high-flying notions, that she did not inquire into them before she allowed matters to go so far; but then she was getting a little *passee* and desperate."

"Why, she does not seem so very old," said Miss Campbell, who was one of the party.

"No, Annie, not very old," replied Shirley, "but a little shopworn. She has been a good while on the market, and customers begin to be shy of her."

"You abominable fellow!" said Mrs. Campbell, laughing; "to make use of such language in respect to one of Our Set!"

"Go on with your story, Shirley," said Campbell. "I am curious to hear the end of it."

"Where was I? Ah, I have it! Well, then, Miss Trafton was in blissful ignorance of Beaumont's origin. But it so happened one day that she somewhere fell in with a gentleman who came from Beaumont's native place. He was a stranger, and knew nothing of how affairs stood between Beaumont and Miss Trafton; and on the latter inquiring if he knew a gentleman by the name of Beaumont, he replied that he did not. Miss Trafton thought that strange, the place being so small, where one would be likely to know all the inhabitants. After a moment's thought the gentleman remembered that there was but one family of that name, an old fellow, a cobbler, or cordwainer by trade; and come to think of it, he did have a son, who was rather ambitious, and he believed went to college. People, he now remembered, used to talk of the old fellow's working early and late to give his son an education. Beaumont—Auguste Beaumont—yes, that was his name; rather foppish in his dress, but said to be a very clever fellow.

"Imagine, if you can," continued Shirley, "my lady's feelings! Of course it was all up with poor Beaumont after that. I do not know how she managed to sever the connection, but she lost no time in doing it; and not a soul now ventures to breathe his name in her presence."

"In my opinion, it was a fortunate thing for Beaumont," said Campbell. "I learn that he has got along famously. He tried the law for a spell, but by some fortunate chance having got hold of a new invention, it is said he is making his fortune out of it."

"Yes," responded Shirley, "and to his credit, I am told, he has placed his father above want or the necessity of labor. By the by, I fell in with the 'Walking Encyclopedia,'—old Blab, you know—and he treated me to a history of the Traftons. Her maternal grandfather, he says, earned an honest penny by shoeing horses and cattle, and he couldn't see, he said, 'why that gal should stick herself up so much above Beaumont,' as the shoeing of horses he did not consider a whit more respectable than the shoeing of men."

As Shirley came to a conclusion a burst of music met their ears.

"They are dancing in the old hall," said Campbell. "Come, Jane, suppose that we go over and trip it awhile; Annie and Shirley, I know, are both on tiptoe for it."

"What if Miss Canby should be there?" his wife said, hesitating a little.

"A fig for Miss Canby and the whole set!" said Campbell. "I am not going to be cheated out of my dance on her or their account. She is the one to avoid us, my dear, and not we her."

"Come, Annie!" said Shirley, offering his arm to the beautiful girl beside him, his whole manner towards her plainly evincing the terms on which he stood with her. "I say 'ditto' to Jim; hang Miss Canby and all her set!"

Making their way across the green, the party entered the hall, and were soon whirling in the mazes of the dance, in which pleasing performance we leave them.



THESPIS BEFORE THE MAST.

Macy, W H

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THESPIS BEFORE THE MAST.

BY W. H. MACY.

"WHAT say ye, boys, let's get up a theatre! That will be the very thing to interest all hands."

The speaker had been stretched on the barrel of the windlass, his head braced up against the pawls, in an attitude which seemed well adapted to produce permanent distortion of the spine. Under the inspiration of this luminous idea, his naked feet flew upward with a vigorous kick at empty air, and were brought down to the deck with a force that threw him up into a sitting posture with the elasticity of a Jack-in-the-box.

"A good ship" was the Concordia, in the most extended sense of the phrase, as seamen employ it; and a happy set of lads we were, accordingly. On this particular evening we had been racking our brains for a new species of amusement to beguile the idle hours. We had tripped it on the 'light fantastic' and the

heavy unelastic toe, to the screeching of the cook's fiddle (I beg the sable artist's pardon, violin), alternating the orthodox "main-decker" of "two sets and a haze" with the more elaborate quadrille. We had shouldered scrub-brooms and handspikes to march and countermarch round the tryworks in Indian file, and to drill in the manual upon original systems not to be found in Hardee or Upton. We had crossed single-sticks, parodied Sullivan and Deaf Burke, and grappled each other in wrestling matches. We had interchanged autobiographies from the cradle upwards, sung every song, sacred or profane, that had ever haunted our memories, and devoured every word of letter-press on board, even to the advertisements and law-notices in an eighteen-months'-old newspaper. A new sensation was demanded by the *vox populi*; and Jem Stark, public-spirited youth that

he was, had struck a lead, which, if vigorously worked, promised to yield golden returns.

"Can't we have a circus, too?" suggested Joe Downer.

"A circus?" No! Who ever heard of a circus without horses?"

"But there's the mincing-horse, for one," retorted the Joker, "and there's Warner, the backwoodsman, who tells us he is half-horse and half-snapping-turtle, so we can muster a horse and a half."

"To say nothing of the Flemish-horses," said Charley Burrows, from the windlass-end. "Then here's the finest chance in the world for ground and lofty tumbling—tight and slack ropes always ready, horizontal bars at any undesirable height, and—"

"We get enough of those performances while on duty," said Stark, impatiently. "For recreation we must keep to the legitimate drama. Here, Ryan," he continued, to the young man who had come forward after being relieved from the wheel. "We are going to start a theatre. Are you ready to take a part?"

"O yes! Count me in, by all means," answered Ryan, who was always ready for a lark. "You'll find me a very Nick Bottom. 'I could play 'Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.' But what are we to do for scenery?"

"I'm afraid," said I, "that some of our contrivances will be as ridiculous as Bottom's Moonshine and Wall."

"Now, don't begin to raise stumbling-blocks or throw cold water on the matter at the outset," said the enthusiastic Stark. "There's no knowing how much may be done with limited materials until we set ourselves to work with a will."

Stark, as the originator of so glorious a project, was made manager-in-chief by acclamation, while Ryan, Downer, Charley Burrows and I resolved ourselves into an executive committee on the spot. Many difficulties, which, at first sight, appeared insurmountable, were overcome by dint of ingenuity and patience. A few days afterwards a poster on the mainmast announced to such of our shipmates as had not been "in the cabinet" that "Concordia Saloon would open that evening (Wind, weather and whales permitting), with the prison-scene in Pizarro, followed by an original song, and to conclude with an afterpiece entitled, 'The Deputy Shepherd,' now represented for the first time on any stage!"

Inquisitive glances from the quarter-deck were directed at us, in the vain hope of getting a peep behind the scenes before the curtain should rise. But neither scenery nor curtain was visible. The ship was put under short sail in the dog-watch, as usual; and as soon as darkness settled down upon the sea, we began to prepare the stage on the star-board bow, as the most eligible place. There was no room for both actors and audience under deck, to say nothing of the heat, which, in that latitude, would have been intolerable.

A couple of tail-blocks were lashed aloft, and an immense drop, ingeniously contrived by attaching to a studdingsail-yard a vast extent of palm-leaf matting, manufactured by the savages at the Gilbert Islands, was hoisted into its place abreast the foremast, side and back, screens of the same material separated stage from green-room and effectually hid the preparatory mysteries from curious eyes. The only way to anticipate, was by ascending the fore-rigging high enough to look over the drop.

All hands, including of course captain and officers, rallied to a focus and began clamoring for music with all the enthusiasm and impatience of a Bowery audience. Whereupon the orchestra, represented by the cook with violin, and an Irish boy with triangle, from some mysterious place of concealment, started off in a barbarous piece, full of knots, gnarls and spasmodic starts, which the talented leader called "de Railroad Overturn, juss as dey plays it to Christy's."

But Joe Downer, who had been cast for the part of the incorruptible sentinel, was also the next helmsman, in right of succession. The two parts were certainly incompatible in the same individual. But Captain Bradley, who had entered into the spirit of the thing, was not to be balked of his sport, and disposed of this difficulty in a summary manner.

"Haul the mainyard in aback!" said he. "Put the wheel down and lock it!"

This arrangement was, of course, satisfactory to all parties.

"No duty called the jovial tars,
The helm was lashed a-lee,"

"Hoist away the rag!" was the cry, and up went the curtain upon a scene at once historic and histrionic.

Downer, *solus*, harnessed up in a labyrinth of crossbelts, shedding a halo round him from an immense crescent of bright sheathing copper which surmounted his forehead, and

bearing stiffly at "support" a ponderous king's arm which proclaimed him a soldier, despite the anachronism of two centuries, paced back and forth before a wall of dingy deal boards, over which floated the gorgeous flag of old Spain. A single lantern hanging from the battlements illumined his lonely beat; but the moon, most auspiciously rising at the moment off the starboard bow, added materially to the scenic effect.

"Moonshine and Wall!" said Charley Burrows, in a burst of enthusiasm.

Enter Rolla (Tom Ryan), from behind the fore-scuttle, enveloped in twenty yards of blue "dungaree," with a Russia cap pulled over his face, a pair of real *Japanese* sandals on his feet and four fathoms of ratline-stuff, such as monks have worn from time immemorial, wound round his body. Downer, at this sight, makes the sign of the cross, and, in so doing, forgets to "support" his musket. It drops heavily upon his toes, drawing from his lips an expletive which is not to be found in the authorized text of this popular drama, but which was greeted with rapturous applause from pit and gallery.

Rolla (in a sepulchral voice, quivering with suppressed laughter), "Inform me, friend, is Alonzo the Peruvian confined within this dungeon?"

Sentinel (with tears in his eyes, and spasmodic movements of the left foot), "*Of course he is!*"

This was too much for the holy father's risibles. He vanished down the forecastle-ladder, roaring with laughter, and the old Castilian limped after him, as the curtain came down by the run, amid the grand explosion that followed from all hands.

Pizarro was postponed to another occasion, and the indignant remonstrances of Manager Stark were drowned in uproarious peals of mirth. He alone had no conception of the ludicrous character of the opening scene, as he had remained in the background, dressed and booked up for the part of Alonzo, and waiting for his cue. The audience, however, were all in good humor and hailed with applause the advent of Burrows. He was rewarded with nine cheers at the conclusion of his original song, which was given with full orchestral accompaniment of steel and catgut.

"The Deputy Shepherd," though it might have been new to the stage, could lay no claim to originality, being simply an adaptation of a chapter from "*Pickwick*." The

scene was illustrative of "an affecting interview" in the snuggery of the Fleet Prison. The part of Sam was assigned to me; and Burrows, in virtue of his beardless face, filled the rôle of mother-in-law, Manager Stark was Stiggins the "Shepherd," while Ryan found ample scope for his humor in the part of the Senior Weller. This last is one of the most unctuous of Dickens's creations, and not the less so, from his seeming unconsciousness of his own absurdities. Sam's wit, in many cases, swells of the oil, seeming elaborated for the occasion. But the old gentleman, a strange compound of shrewdness and verdancy, is never more ludicrous than in his serious moments, and in fact, is most irresistibly funny when he has the least intention of being so.

Ryan, made up to Falstaffian proportions, and perspiring furiously under his load of slop-chest monkey-jackets, stuffed out with oakum, sits alone on the stage, hat and whip in hand, roaring the family name "Weller!" at measured intervals. This is my cue to rush from the green-room, and the well-known dialogue begins. Everybody's feelings are elevated at the appearance of "the red-nosed man," buttoned up in a clerical garment manufactured for the occasion, with his hole-y gloves on and bearing the inevitable cotton umbrella. We happened to have on board a veritable specimen of this truly nautical instrument, brought from home by a youth from the rural districts. He had been assured by a shrewd dealer that it was indispensable for a night-watch on shipboard.)

But the climax of merriment was reached when Burrows entered in female habiliments, looking of course the very counterpart of the late "Susan Clarke, Markis o' Granby Dorking." The bonnet especially claimed attention as a masterpiece of art; having been improvised from a palm-leaf hat of the first magnitude, and decorated with streamers of rainbow hues. In style it may have been a Navarino, a Solferino, or a Sebastopol—I pretend to little knowledge of historical or geographical millinery.

The "performance" of hysterics, though evincing a want of feminine tact, was, on the whole, highly creditable to Burrows; but tears were difficult to manage without the aid of onions, a luxury to which we had been strangers for at least a twelvemonth.

The "wanity" imbibed by the Shepherd and his flock, so far from being "warm, my dear young friend, with three lumps of sugar

to the tumbler," was simply a molasses-and-water cocktail, dashed with limejuice, the compound being known to the initiated as "Lyman Johnson." A strictly temperance beverage, and a wholesome one withal; presuming that the limejuice, as in our case, is the real article, and not based upon sulphuric acid. The reverend gentleman's discourse upon the vice of intoxication was not, therefore, so ironical as it might have been under other circumstances.

But the alliterative saving clause before mentioned, "wind, weather and whales permitting," had not without good reason been inserted in the bills of the evening. A tropical squall was gathering; such a one as is manufactured from a clear sky at ten minutes' notice, and spends its whole fury in ten more. It was found expedient to hurry up matters, and to clip the programme a little. But the elements were too quick for us. Just as Mr. Stiggins was in the midst of one of his most brilliant, because most incoherent, passages, while old Weller divided the applause by his masterly counterfeit of apoplectic sleep, the squall met us, butt-end foremost.

"*Throw down the topsail halyards clear!*" roared Captain Bradley; but there was hardly time to obey the order, ere the stage suddenly inclined to an angle of forty-five. The signal lantern suspended over our heads was extinguished, the slide-screen of matting was blown in upon us, enveloping the whole *corps dramatique* in its folds, and the rain followed, a perfect deluge while it lasted. Burrows, encumbered by his ample skirts, "fetched away" in his chair, and laying hold of his obese partner, Ryan, with a desperate clutch, they both rolled together into the lee scuppers. The shepherd, still unsteady on his legs, was thrown heavily against the galley-door, and sobered by a drenching from the bucket of Lyman Johnson, which still more than half full, had obeyed the law of gravitation in company with various other little matters. I, alone, as became the ready and active Sam, maintained a position to windward of the foremast, but narrowly escaped a fractured skull from the spar attached to the drop-curtain. One end of this had been let run in the confusion by some one who was trying to clear the buntlines belayed to the same pin.

The force of the wind was all spent in the first blast. The ship righted again, and the danger was all over; but the rain poured in torrents for a few minutes, while high above

its rushing, rattling sound rose shrieks of laughter from all quarters at our ludicrous plight. Everybody lent a hand to clear the wreck and secure the "properties," while we actors made an ignominious kind of exit from the stage. But Ryan, sustaining his part to the last, bawled, "A-do Samvel!" while Mrs. Weller wept bitterly because "her best bonnet was ruined."

"Of course something would happen to spoil our first appearance," growled Stark, who, though a good shipmate in the main, had that infirmity of temper which conceals from its possessor all the humor of a joke whereof he himself is one of the victims.

But the irascible manager was laughed into good humor again, and the dramatic essay was pronounced, both forward and aft, a grand success, as far as it went. We were given to understand that the quarter-deck, which offered many advantages as a Thespian temple, would be at our service for the next performance. Our shipmates were inoculated with the stage fever, and several recruits joined our ranks. We were enabled to extend our operations, and Concordia Saloon became a fixed fact. Even an army of "supers" could be raised, equipped and drilled at short notice. Truly a motley army! with hardly two soldiers who were combatants—but what of that?

"It's the Cosmopolitan Theatre," said the manager, triumphantly.

"No pent-up fore-castle contracts our powers. But the whole main and quarter-deck are ours," added Tom Ryan, striking an attitude.

"All the ship's a stage," continued Joo Downer. "The officers and sailors merely players." But don't ask me to shoulder a musket again. My toes are black and blue yet; and, furthermore, I'm opposed to *sogering*, on principle."

In due time we essayed *Macbeth* in full force and played it successfully. True, Burrows was not exactly Mrs. Siddons, and Stark played the part of a double assassin in murdering King Duncan and the immortal bard at one and the same time. The scenery, too, required the aid of a lively imagination to render it satisfactory. But the ghosts and apparitions shot up through the skylight with startling effect. The stout Thane of Fife and the usurper made the fire fly in the death-scene, as they "laid on" with weapons of sixpenny hoop-iron, clumsy enough to have served the muscular patriot Wallace and the

redoubtable Guy of Warwick. Altogether, our rendering of the great tragedy was all that could have been expected of amateurs, under the disadvantages of place and materials.

But the theatrical season was to close with the cruise on the equator; for the next was to be made in a higher latitude. As we had in rehearsal at the time we anchored in the coral-girt haven of Koosaya, an original drama written by Stark and Ryan expressly for us, it was determined to bring it out under royal patronage, and finish up the campaign by a grand performance on shore.

The use of the great council-house was obtained, an application to King Rooa-tari, and the resources of the ship were freely drawn upon in preparing for the occasion. The theatre was handsomely decorated with bunting and pieces of gay-colored cloth, and brilliantly illuminated by fragments of candle stuck up in every available spot.

Nothing could have been better adapted for a stage than the raised platform which extended across one end of the spacious building. Indeed Stark averred that the savage architect who had superintended its erection must have had this very matter in view.

"Boys, we must all do our very best to-night," he said, "for this is an era, both in our own history and in that of our patrons. It is not only the first night of our literary bantling, but it may be called the inauguration of the Micronesian drama!"

"And the drama may do as great a work," said Tom Ryan, "in the cause of civilization as the church, the newspaper or the gallows. These are not available for us, as they require more time and labor to introduce them. We'll leave them for our successors, but

"The play's the thing,
Wherein we'll catch the conscience of the king."

But, as we soon had occasion to learn, a less susceptible subject than the usurper Rooa-tari it would have been difficult to find.

This man was no King *Dei gratia*, but a sort of savage Bonaparte, who had gone into the business with no capital but his own brute courage and audacity. He was even now at war with a tribe from the other side of the mountain who espoused the claims of a powerful rival chieftain. The precarious tenant of a tottering throne, upheld only by spear and war-club. A king, in short, with no "divinity to hedge him in." His "con-

science," if he could be said to have any, moved in an orbit too eccentric to be "caught" by a party of sailor-actors.

Our audience, in point of numbers, was all that could be desired, the gentler sex being largely represented. But it was soon apparent that the decorations had more attraction for them than all our histrionic efforts. The gay bunting of the drop-curtain, in a double sense, obscured all that was behind it; and *tappa* was more potent than Terpsichore; for not even a grand dance, introducing the whole company in the opening scene, could fix their attention.

The new piece had been written specially for a nautical audience. The principal character was, as all gallant tars are known to be, an Admirable Crichton in all branches of knowledge and the embodiment of every moral virtue. Of his sweetheart, it is sufficient praise to say that she was worthy of his devotion. All the other characters were so unfortunate as to have business on *terra firma*, and were necessarily incarnations of evil, under the comprehensive name of "land-sharks."

But the beauties of so truthful a picture of civilized life were lost upon Rooa-tari and his unappreciative subjects. In vain we played at the king. In vain we lavished our best efforts, watching for an indication of the dawning of anything like dramatic taste in his benighted mind. He might have been a tobacco-sign sculptured in black walnut, save that his eyes rolled covetously now and then towards the draperies of red and yellow cotton. His subjects, male and female, took their cue from royalty and followed his example.

The warriors had come, armed to the teeth, like Puritans of old to the house of prayer. For scouts were out on the mountain, and the rebellious tribe of Aree-nooa valley were just then more than usually turbulent. A night attack was not improbable at any moment and the warlike Rooa-tari was not the man to neglect any precautions. The body of the house presented, therefore, a scene more unique and imposing than anything we could display on the stage.

Our officers and shipmates were all present except a small guard or anchor watch. The ship lay very near the shore and all hands had been furloughed for this occasion. Our boats lay in readiness at the water side to receive us, actors, scenery, properties and all as soon as the evening's entertainment should be over.

"Stark, what do you think of the prospects of the English drama among the Koosayans?" asked the waggish Downer, while we were preparing for the second act.

"Think!" returned the disappointed manager, "why, it's only casting pearls before swine. I was in hopes the royal presence might be worth something to us; but this wooden-headed barbarian has about as much appreciation of our work as old Doctor Johnson had of music when he said it was not so disagreeable a noise as some others."

"He hasn't moved a muscle since the curtain rose," said I, "except such as were required to roll his ugly eyeballs about. But I'll wake him up in the next act, see 'f I don't."

"How in the world are you going to manage it?" he inquired, in surprise. For I was cast for an unimportant part, as one of the misguided landsmen.

"Never mind," I answered, ominously; "you'll see."

"If you can galvanize him into life," said Stark, "do so; and I'll acknowledge you to be a worker of miracles."

The curtain rose upon a melting interview between Jack and his sweetheart. (The hero was called Jack, of course; as it is well known every seaman ought to be; such being the generic name of the whole fraternity in song and story, if we except Tom Bowline and Black-eyed Susan's William.)

Pending this parting scene between the lovers, Jack's ship, the Thunderbolt, is supposed to be lying at "short-stay-peak," with the foretopsail loosed and flaunting the blue Peter. A gun fired from her is to notify them that she is ready to break ground, and to be the signal for them to break a ring, and exchange their final vows, according to established precedent in such cases. It fell to my duty to give this cruel signal by a rap upon a small but sonorous native tom-tom which stood in a corner of the council-house. But while preparing our stage during the previous day, I had peered into the mysteries of a smaller building adjoining the theatre. I resolved now that the Thunderbolt's parting salute should be such as became a first-rate man-of-war. It should be no popgun, but one of her main-deck battery.

This little temple I had found to be devoted solely to the keeping and storage of the *pahu* or great drum. This was a gigantic instrument, hideously decorated, and the heads of which are supposed to be made of the skins

of hostile warriors slain in battle. There was only one instrument of the kind in the tribe, and it was never sounded except upon occasions of great solemnity. Indeed no hand was permitted to touch it save that of the king himself, or the high priest Orotoo, who at that moment sat in the theatre at his majesty's elbow. The only exception was in case of invasion by an enemy, when, like a fire-alarm, it might be sounded by the first person who chanced to be near the temple at the moment; and its first stroke was a summons for every able-bodied man to be under arms. Knowing my cue, I waited quietly near the tom-tom in the corner till the moment drew nigh when I was to thump on it. Then, without saying a word to any of my shipmates, I glided swiftly out of the door and into the small temple. The *pahu* stood on an elevated stand, and was reached by ascending several steps built for the purpose.

Without stopping to reflect upon the consequences of my mad freak I bounded up the steps and seized, with sacrilegious hands, the mammoth drumsticks, two highly polished clubs of the *toa*, or iron-wood. Bringing them into position for beating the long-roll, I threw all my muscular power into the work. The effect upon my own ears was truly deafening. I can liken it to nothing that I have ever experienced, before or since. But those of my seafaring brethren who have served on board a turreted monitor, and assisted in "bombarding Sumter from a kettle," may have a correct idea of what I mean.

I could, of course, know nothing of its effect upon others until I paused. As the reverberation partially died away a new sound took its place; a chorus of unearthly yells from many voices blended, no less startling and terrific than the infernal din of the *pahu* itself.

Realizing, for the first time, the possible effect of my rashness, I cleared the flight of steps at a single bound. Rushing into the theatre I found it deserted by all the natives while the last of my shipmates were crowding through the door which led to the beach, loaded with the portable articles brought on shore during the day. Jack's voluminous white trousers flashed through the darkness down the coral slope, and Burrows had torn off his feminine skirts to join the general stampede in light marching order. The flag of our country was trailing in the dirt, having been snatched from its place and dragged through the door without rolling up.

The yells of the armed warriors receded inland, as they rushed in the direction of a defile by which the enemy might be expected to make an inroad. A night attack by the rebels of Areonova valley was the only solution of the alarm that had yet occurred to them. That any one of us white strangers should have dared to profane the temple, and to lay hands upon the sacred *pahu*, was a possibility which had not once entered the mind of Rooa-tari.

But I had not escaped unobserved from the temple. I caught sight of a female face peering round the corner of the council-house as I rushed from one door to the other. While all the males had rallied to arms at the first sound, this daughter of Eve, impelled by curiosity, had discovered the trick.

We had hardly hoisted our boats on board the Concordia, when the warriors were heard returning, the shouts approaching nearer and nearer, till the whole force were assembled on the beach abreast the ship, and Rooa-tari's canoe was soon paddling alongside.

He at once sought an interview with Captain Bradley who was quite innocent of any knowledge of the author of the alarm. But the meddlesome female witness had been brought off in the canoe, and she was not long in pointing out the implous wretch. I was ordered to report at head-quarters and the captain attempted to reprimand me. But he broke down in a paroxysm of laughter,

as a vivid recollection of the scene in the theatre came up afresh in his mind.

This unaccountable conduct served only to add to the fury of the irate Rooa-tari. I doubt not he would, at the moment, have destroyed the ship and every man on board, had he felt strong enough to do it; but entertaining a wholesome dread of our firearms, he found it inexpedient to make the matter a *casus belli*. A few pieces of the coveted cotton cloth soon changed the current of his thoughts, and he departed richer if not wiser than he came.

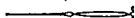
I should hardly have ventured on shore again had I found the opportunity. But the ship was ready for sea; and the next morning a fresh trade wind was filling her canvas and wafting us onward towards the great Nor'west.

"Didn't I tell you I'd wake him up, boys?" said I, as we were stowing the anchors. "I'll warrant you never saw all hands called quicker than that."

"But you spoiled our new play with your infernal war-drum," grumbled Stark, dropping the corners of his mouth.

"I improvised a *play* of my own, far better adapted to *move* an audience than yours was. The *pahu* was the greatest *hit* of our dramatic season. It's

"The thing
Wherein I caught the conscience of the king.'"



TIP'S PROPHECY.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

You would not imagine that one could build very brilliant air-castles in a poor-house, but such splendid ones as Tip built there are rarely seen by any pair of bright eyes. Poor, forlorn, friendless little Tip, with her shy frightened ways, and pale sweet face! She found the world a place full of hard unsympathetic faces, few and sharp words, empty closets, frosty weather, pinching pain and few holidays, but in her dreams it was fair. She lived in a dingy country poorhouse, cold and comfortless enough in winter, though the summer sunshine and the green cornfields and orchards that rustled about it made it seem almost—pleasant to Tip. But, after all, it was in winter, that she built her rosiest castles when her day's work was done, and the firelight shone on the frosty windows. I said that Tip was friendless, but I was wrong. She *did* have one friend, and that was a poor old crippled man, whose hair was white as wool, and who was hardly able to move from his chair, even on crutches. The two seemed to take great pleasure in each other's society, and were always full of little confidences. If anything pleasant *did* happen to the poor old man, he could hardly wait until Tip came to hear about it. Sometimes an old crony would send him a pound or so of nice tea, or a package of extra tobacco, and sometimes Deacon Smith would send him a cast-off coat of his own, to keep his poor old limbs warm through the bitter winter. Tip would rejoice with him at such times as if it were her own good fortune, and Uncle Peter would tell funny stories to celebrate the happy event, and play Auld Lang Syne and Bonnie Doon on his old cracked-voiced violin until Tip's eyes fairly danced for joy. They were everything to each other, this queer couple, and once when Tip went berrying and a terrible storm came up so that she could not get home, but was obliged to seek shelter for the night in a little hut near the field, the old man cried like a baby, and would neither eat nor drink until she came back again the next day.

Tip told him all her bright dreams, and forgot her own forlorn condition in trying to comfort him. She sold berries and bought

him little dainties, read the Bible and a book of fairy tales to him, in her soft childish voice, and I don't know which pleased him most, the New Testament or Jack and the Beanstalk. The fairy book was a legacy to him from a brother pauper who had died years before, leaving only that and an old rocking-chair behind him, both of which he willed to Uncle Peter. In the winter Tip robbed her own bed of its scanty covering, to make him comfortable, fixed a screen round his poor rheumatic old back, to keep the wind from it, and was always nestling up to him, and fondling him as if she were his own little girl. The other paupers made fun of their intimacy, and called them all sorts of queer names, but they did not mind that at all, but grew more and more fond of each other every day.

Neither Tip nor Uncle Peter had any relatives, that they knew of, in the wide world. Tip's father died before she was born, and her mother when she was a baby. Uncle Peter had a wife and a little girl once, but they had died so long ago that he could hardly remember their faces. It seemed like a dream to him that they had ever lived. He had a brother, too, who went to India when he was a young man, and he had never seen him since. The last he heard from him he was making a great deal of money; but he had been silent for a long time, and Uncle Peter supposed he must be dead. He had written to him many times, but never received any answer to his letters.

Uncle Peter came to the poorhouse just after Tip was born, ten years before the time I write of, and he used to tell Tip about her mother.

"I tell you, Tip, she was born and bred a lady, if she *did* die in the poorhouse," he used to say.

Then he would tell her over and over again, how she loved her, and how she grieved to leave her poor little helpless baby alone in the great cruel world, with no one to love her ever so little, and Tip never got tired of it. He would always add:

"I loved you then, Tip, though you were such a mite of a thing, and I told your mother so, and that I'd always keep an eye on

you. Of course she knew that I couldn't be much help to you, though—such a poor old vagabond as I was. It is you that have helped me, Tip. I couldn't live without you now! Sometimes I'm afraid you'll leave me before I die."

Then Tip would throw her arms round the old man's neck, and amid a perfect shower of kisses and tears, assure him that she was very grateful to him for his love, and would never, never leave him, as long as she lived.

It was a still sunshiny summer day, and Tip was out in the cornfield gathering green corn for dinner, and dreaming her dreams. Poppies were nodding in between the corn-rows like files of fairy soldiers in their scarlet caps. The birds were making their merriest music in the silver birches that leaned against the fence, and Tip was almost as happy as they, for the moment. The birds always seemed to say to her, "Good times are coming! good times are coming!"

Tip almost forgot what she was sent for, her castles in the air were so splendid, and she stood with idle hands, looking about her, until of a sudden the appearance of a pair of roguish blue eyes blinking through the cornstalks brought her to her senses.

"Dear me!" said Tip, with a start.

"Dear me!" mimicked a funny little voice full of laughter, and out stepped a wee curly-headed mite, with a freckled nose, who might have been lost in the corn forest, the corn-tassels were so high above her head. She was holding up the skirt of her dainty white dress, which was crammed with red poppies, and but for the freckles on her funny little nose, and the traces of a recent candy-feast about her mouth, Tip would have been almost sure that she was a fairy, everything about her was so fine and dainty. She wore tiny blue boots buttoned with wee white buttons, her white dress was covered with delicate embroidery, a blue ribbon sash was tied about her waist, and she wore a gold necklace about her neck. Tip had never seen a little girl half so fine, and stood regarding her with speechless admiration. The little thing eyed her, too, for a while, then said gravely, but very coolly:

"Bess got lost, she doesn't know where she is. What is your name?"

"My name is Eliza, but Uncle Peter calls me Tip, coz he used to call his little girl, Tip. Most everybody calls me Tip, now."

"Tisn't a very nice name, and you are a

very big girl. I like you, though," said the mite, regarding Tip approvingly. "Say, do you know where home is? No, not home, but where mamma and nurse live now?" she added, with a slight shade of trouble in her baby eyes.

"No," said Tip, very much puzzled.

Then a sudden light dawned on her mind. There were city people boarding at the hotel in the village, and this little maid must have strayed from there. But it was more than half a mile away.

"Is it a big white house, with green blinds, and a piazza in front?" said she.

"Yes," said the little girl. "An azza in front, and a pump right out in the street!"

"And you came away all alone, and got lost. I know the way there, and I'll take you to your mamma," said Tip, forgetting her corn, the dinner, and everything but her.

"No," said the child, "not quite yet. Bess likes to get lost. Bess hopes she'll never get home again!" And she laughed a reckless little laugh, showing all her wee pointed teeth.

"No," said Tip, greatly shocked, and feeling a motherly care over the mite; "you must not say *that*, because it can't be the truth. How would you feel never to see your mamma or papa again?"

"Wouldn't care," said Bess, shaking her curls willfully.

"God writes down everything you say in a book, and he'll show it to you some day," said Tip, who had profited by the instructions of Miss Lane, an aged pauper who was very pious.

"Pooh! Bess can't read writing if he does," said the child, scornfully.

Tip looked meditative and perplexed, but said nothing.

"If Bess is bad, Bess shan't go to heaven; but she'd a good deal rather stay here. Make Bess a wreath of these poppies, and she'll wear it home; she lost her hat."

"Well," said Tip, "I'll make it on the way, and I'll show you a bird's nest down by the fence as we go along."

Tip was a womanly little thing, if she was ten years old, and she knew her mother would be worried about her.

"Come," said Bess, eagerly, "where is the bird's nest?"

So they made their way out of the corn, and towards the road, Bess clinging to Tip's hand, and very conversational.

The bird's nest was quite a way down the

road towards the village. Tip had found it a few days before, and the sparrows in it were almost large enough to fly. She had taken care to stick up a little stake near it so that she could find the place again. Bess was perfectly delighted with the young birds, and was determined to take one of them in her hands. Mamma Sparrow had gone out for their dinner, and when the silly little things heard the stir about their nest, they supposed she had returned, and opened their big ungainly mouths very wide, expecting to receive a dainty morsel in them. Tip could not coax the child away from them, and was trying to reconcile herself to spending the afternoon there, when suddenly an elegant carriage, drawn by two horses, came dashing along the road.

"O, there's my mamma, I want her to see the tunning' little birds!" said the excited child, rushing out directly in front of the high-spirited horses.

"Take care, Bess! O, do take care!" screamed a lady from the carriage. But it was too late. Bess hit her toe against a stone, and in her haste and excitement, fell almost under the feet of the horses. In vain the driver tried to stop them, for the screams of Bess's mother rendered them almost frantic, and in another moment poor little Bess would have been trampled under their feet, if it had not been for Tip, who, at the peril of her own life, rushed forward and dragged her out of harm's way. It was done with surprising quickness. Tip did not know how she did it, but she was entirely out of breath, and pale and dizzy with excitement.

"Lift the little girl into the carriage," said Bess's mother to the driver; "I want to talk with her."

And before Tip could speak, she was nestled amid the soft cushions, beside the beautiful and richly-attired lady, who took one of her little hard brown hands in her own dainty jewelled one, and tried to tell her how grateful she was to her for saving little Bess's life, and praised her without measure for her courage and coolness. Tip opened her large brown eyes very wide, and looked wonderingly into the lady's face, for no one ever spoke so kindly to her before, and no one had ever praised her, with the exception of Uncle Peter.

"Where do you live, my dear? I am going to take you home to your mother. She must be a proud and happy woman to have such a little girl as you are," said she.

"I live at the poorhouse, and my mother is dead," said Tip, sorrowfully.

"What is the poorhouse? Bess wants to live at the poorhouse, too. Bess wants to live with the dood little girl," said Bess, eagerly.

The lady seemed to be in deep meditation for a few moments, then she asked Tip if she would like to come and live with her, and be Bess's playmate and companion.

Tip's eyes danced with delighted surprise, and she was going to say that she would like it above all things, when suddenly she thought of Uncle Peter, and was silent.

"Then you wouldn't like to live with me? Is your life so pleasant at the poorhouse?" said the lady, wonderingly, regarding Tip's poor little toil-hardened hands, and brown bare feet.

"O no!" said Tip; "it's dreadful at the poorhouse. Mrs. Brown, the matron, is so cross, and scolds so hard, and she makes me work all the time. She says that I'm too old to be on the town now, that I ought to earn my own living. And everybody calls me a pauper, and the girls won't play with me, coz I am one. But I can't leave, coz Uncle Peter's there, and I'm all he's got. He would cry if I should go away and leave him, and I couldn't do it anyway. Nobody loves him but me, and nobody loves me in all the world, but just Uncle Peter."

"Bess too, Bess loves you," said the little thing, clinging to her as if she never meant to let her go.

"Is Uncle Peter an old man?" queried the lady. "Well, if he hasn't any one else to care for him, he is very fortunate in having such a devoted little niece."

"He isn't my uncle in reality, you know," said Tip, "only everybody calls him Uncle Peter, coz he's so old, I s'pose."

"Then he has no claim upon you, after all, and still you prefer to remain in the poorhouse for his sake. I would care for you as if you were my own, and Bess loves you now, you see," said the lady, who had taken a strange fancy to Tip.

"I told him, long ago, that I never would leave him, if I could help it," said Tip. "He has been very good to me. Please don't say anything to Mrs. Brown about taking me, if you see her, coz she'll make me go, if you do."

The lady promised that she would not do so, but that she wanted to speak to Uncle Peter.

Great was the excitement at the poorhouse when the fine carriage, drawn by two horses that looked as if they were covered with black satin, drove up to the poorhouse door; and great was the surprise of everybody, to see Tip emerge from it, followed by a fine lady and a little girl. Mrs. Brown rushed to the door with a scolding for Tip, on her tongue's end, but she forbore, when she saw the lady, and put on her very best face. Uncle Peter had been worried about his friend, she was absent so long, and felt delighted to see her once more, safe and alive.

"I didn't know what Mrs. Brown was going to do to you, for not bringing in the corn for dinner, Tip. She threatened dreadful things! But I'm glad you went with the little girl."

He seemed so fond of Tip, that the lady's heart misgave her when she broached the subject of adopting her, but as business had taken Mrs. Brown out of the room, and she was really desirous of doing so, she began to speak at once.

There were tears in the old man's eyes, but for all that, he urged Tip to go.

"I shan't live much longer to miss you, Tip," said he, "and the lady will let you come and see me sometimes. 'Taint because I don't love you, that I want you to go, but because I love you so much, dear. I can't say but what it will be terribly hard for me to part with you, but it's best. You were made for a lady, and your mother before you."

But Tip was strong in her determination not to leave the old man, and clung to his neck, while the two long-tried friends mingled their tears together.

The lady took her leave much disappointed, but before she did so, she gave Tip a bright gold piece, and the next afternoon an enormous package was sent to the house directed to Uncle Peter and Miss Tip. And what do you suppose it contained? Such a queer variety. A nice warm dressing-gown, and waistcoat, and some under-flannels for Uncle Peter; two dresses, one of calico, and one of soft bright-colored merino, and a pair of nice little boots for Tip. A paper of tea, enough to last one his lifetime, almost, real old Hyson it was, too, and a still larger package of nice white sugar, a quantity of the best tobacco, two pounds of the daintiest confectionery, a present from Bess to Tip, and last, but not least, a book full of wonderful stories!

I can't tell which was the more delighted with these presents, Uncle Peter or Tip. Uncle Peter was like a child himself, and he and Tip both cried for joy over them. They were quite merry for a long time after that, though Mrs. Brown kept Tip hard at work all day, and was very cross. The child was so weary that she could hardly hold her head up when night came, but when Uncle Peter, who could hardly wait for evening all the long lonely day, when he was deprived of the company of his little friend, called for the story-book, she was ready to read to him, and soon forgot her weariness in fairyland. Whenever Uncle Peter got a bit downhearted, and lost his interest in the stories, she would say with such a cheery smile:

"Don't be discouraged, Uncle Peter, better days are coming to us, I'm sure. We shan't always live in the poorhouse, and have Mrs. Brown to scold us, and suffer so with the cold in the winter, and have such watery porridge for supper, and such hard old beds to sleep in. Something tells me all the time, that by-and-by we shall have a cosy wee house of our own, with a big bright snapping fire on the hearth, and a carpet on every floor, such as Mrs. Brown has got in her parlor, and some chairs with soft cushions in them, and a pile of story-books that will reach to the ceiling. Sometimes, p'r'aps we shall have turkey and plum-pudding for dinner, when it isn't Thanksgiving day, I mean."

It wouldn't be long before poor childish old Uncle Peter himself would be planning with her what they would have in this house of theirs, his eyes shining almost as brightly as Tip's, and his tone as glad. His air castles faded very soon, however, while Tip's shone by night and day, in spite of everything. She was always saying, in that sweet cheery voice of hers, "Something good is going to happen to us!" And Uncle Peter would always brighten up wonderfully, whenever she said so.

But it seemed as if she were not going to be a true prophetess, after all, for one day, late in the autumn, Mrs. Brown brought them the saddest news imaginable. They were going to be separated. Mrs. Clark, a farmer's wife, who lived two or three miles away, had been over to the poorhouse that morning, and as she was in search of a little girl to help take care of her children, Mrs. Brown had suggested that Tip would do nicely in that capacity, and when Mrs. Clarke had seen her, she was very anxious to have her; so she was

to go at once. There was hardly any work for Tip to do at the poorhouse in the winter, and the town must get rid of a pauper whenever it could. Poor Tip was in despair, and Uncle Peter was fairly overwhelmed with grief. He sobbed like a baby, and went to bed without his supper that night. But it was all in vain that they begged and entreated to be allowed to remain together. Everybody who was in authority, the selectmen, the overseer and Mrs. Brown, said that Tip must go, and there was no hope. So Tip tied up her clothes in a forlorn little bundle, and was trying to bid Uncle Peter good-by, when what do you think happened? Something which proved that Tip was a true prophetess, something which made Uncle Peter and Tip both feel as if they weren't themselves, but had got mixed up in a fairy tale. A strange gentleman came to the village in search of Mr. Peter Crandall (that was Uncle Peter, you know), and being directed to the poorhouse, came and informed the old man that his brother had just died in India, leaving him nearly two hundred thousand dollars! Uncle Peter was fairly benumbed with surprise, at first, and neither spoke nor moved; then he took Tip in his arms and cried over her, but they were tears of joy.

"Tip," said he, "your good time has come at last. Now we can have the cosy house of our own, and the big fires, and the turkey and plum-pudding for dinner, and everything. There won't be any more hard work for you, dear, but we'll have Thanksgiving days all the time. I guess Mrs. Clark 'll have to find somebody else to tend those cross children of hers."

Tip was as grave and composed as a little woman, in her joy, and tried to quiet Uncle Peter, for she was afraid the excitement might do him harm.

You ought to have seen what a sensation Uncle Peter's sudden rise in the world caused, not only at the poorhouse, but in the whole town. The squire and the minister, the selectmen and everybody came with the

blankest smiles to congratulate Mr. Crandall (he was always old Uncle Peter before), and these same people had lamented before his very face, that he was likely to live so long to be a burden to the town. Mrs. Brown, who had never spoken to him save in harsh accents, and had declared when he complained of his hard-backed old chair that it was too good for him, was afraid that the draught would be cold for him, or that the light might hurt his eyes, brought a chair from her own room for him to sit in, and patted the astonished Tip on the shoulder in the most affectionate manner. Uncle Peter seemed to forget but what they had always been kind to him, and was very pleasant and polite to them all, though he did not urge them to come and see him when he and Tip were at last settled in their home.

It was just the home they had dreamed of, only rather more luxurious, and they were so happy there! Tip was surprised to find what a beautiful world it was, and what good times there were in it, for the reality surpassed her dreams by far. They had the bright fires, and the story-books, and such soft bright carpets, and pretty furniture, beautiful pictures on the walls, and everything that heart could desire. Every day Uncle Peter and Tip went to drive in an easy carriage drawn by two sleek nice horses, both as glad as children, and seeking no other society than that of each other. They always kept their house open to all the poor and homeless, and twice a year gave a grand feast to the paupers, whose condition was bettered in many other ways by Uncle Peter's purse.

Ten years have passed since they went to live in their house, and Uncle Peter is still living, and is less infirm than he used to be, though he is more childish, and can't bear to have Tip out of his sight for a moment. Tip has grown to be a very beautiful young lady, admired as well as loved by everybody, and she's going to be married by-and-by, and Bess, the very Bess whose life she saved, is going to be one of her bridesmaids.



TOMMY'S DREAM.

BY JAMES G. LA ROY.

LITTLE Tommy Finn had been a very bad boy all day. Somehow, everything he did was noisy. What with turning the chairs upside down, tormenting the cat, and doing numberless things that only a spoiled boy in a pet can do, you can well believe how bad he was.

And yet a good many little boys would have been glad, were they as fortunate as he. Up to that day he had been an only child, and spoiled accordingly. When he saw his little red-faced sister, he expressed the greatest contempt at her weakness. To crown all, he mimicked her feeble cry, though he didn't forget to kiss her.

At first he was glad, but that feeling soon gave way to jealousy. Why should the nurse and servants think so much of the baby, to his neglect? She was only a little screeching thing, with a red fist in her mouth, while he was a big boy who actually wore pants! With such sinful feelings as these it is very easy to be bad, you know.

So the day passed, and even Tommy began to grow weary of his wickedness. After tea his poor sick mother ordered Bridget to take him to bed. With all the dignity of six, Tommy refused, and Bridget had to take him off with main strength.

"Let me kiss ma good-night first, then I'll go," said Tommy, as they neared the door. Bad as he was, he wanted his mother's night kiss, you see.

He climbed on the bed and took his mother's weak hand, but she snatched it away.

"Get down, Tommy, and go to bed. I never kiss bad boys, and you have been very

bad to-day. I thought you'd be so glad to have a little sister. Never mind, we can both go away."

Tommy felt like crying right straight out at this, it was so unexpected. But he said nothing, only he had grace enough to hang his head as he walked out. So he had to go to bed without his customary kiss, and he felt it very much.

Somehow he didn't half say his prayers, his thoughts were elsewhere. Something troubled him, and he knew not what name to give it. Since then he has learned that it was his CONSCIENCE!"

Hour after hour passed, still there he lay, not the least bit sleepy. It was very warm with his head under the quilts, for Tommy felt very cowardly that night. Did you ever see a vicious person, dear reader, who was brave? Of course you never did!

Such being the case, it isn't to be wondered that Tommy shuddered at the least bit of sound. Other nights he had been asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

At last a drowsy feeling took possession of him. Suddenly a face, dark and hideous, appeared before him. It shot up straight on his body, and the long legs executed a wild dance. Tommy didn't, of course, like such proceedings, but he was speechless. A shrill laugh from the figure before him made his blood run cold.

With a leer the horrid face peered into his eyes, almost blinding him. Then, all of a sudden, this wicked libel on a man hopped backwards, saying:

"You have served me faithfully to-day,

Tommy, and if you continue through life this way, I'll be your firmest friend. Trust in me always, and I won't fail you. Here's my hand on it." And he held out his hand.

Tommy looked at it with horror. Long and rough, the like he had never seen before. So he hesitated, seeing which the wicked figure said, "How dainty we are, to be sure! I hold myself as good as you are. Come, away with that false delicacy." And again the awful hand pushed forward.

What could poor Tommy do? Even while he hesitated, the hand touched his, and fire darted out of the mouth of the figure before him.

"Come, hurry up—I can't stay here much longer. If you don't, you'll have the benefit of this fire."

There seemed to be no way out of his difficulty, so he touched his hand. Slight as the touch was, every nerve and sinew in Tommy's little body shook with fire. Then the figure grew smaller, and as it disappeared entirely, Tommy thought with a shudder to whom he had made his promise.

Almost instantly a most beautiful figure, clothed in white, appeared before him. As he gazed entranced, she neared him.

"Don't you know that you've been a very bad boy to-day, Tommy? Of course you do; but hanging your head won't excuse you. I know all about your bad capers, and I've come to warn you." So saying, the beautiful creature approached within a foot of the shamefaced Tommy.

He had nothing to say, so silence reigned a few minutes. Then the fairy continued:

"Well, I'm glad to see that you feel a little shame, but that doesn't in the least excuse your conduct of to-day. Perhaps you are not aware of the mischief you have done."

"I'm really sorry," Tommy managed to gasp.

"Sorry? I should think you would be. Any boy that's got a mother as good as you have, ought to feel grateful. Besides that, you ought to feel glad that you have such a nice sister. I know some boys who would be happy enough, if I'd only let them have her. I think—"

"Don't give her away, good fairy!"

"As if you cared. You deserve some punishment for almost killing your mother to-day. But you can't do any more harm to

her; she'll only live a few hours." The good fairy prepared to go.

"Save her, and I'll be O so good! Just try me once, won't you, good fairy?"

With a scornful laugh the good fairy shook her head.

"No, that won't do. Of course you'll promise that, after all the mischief is done. Besides, didn't you make another promise a few minutes ago? Now, that corresponds with your wickedness. Do you really think you could mend your ways and—"

"Try me! try me, good fairy! I'll be ever so good, and I'll never say a cross word—no, never!" And poor Tommy was so eager as he spoke. Surely the good fairy was now relenting.

"What would you give, if I allowed your mother and baby to stay with you a while longer?"

"There's my new kite and top—"

"Pooh! what nonsense to think these as great a treasure as their lives. Come, I'll give you another chance."

"I've more, good fairy; there's my drum, and trumpet, and hobby—"

"Fellow! what nonsense again. But you can never buy me through your toys. What good are they to me? Well, well, hurry up. I don't think you care much about your mother and little sister."

Just to think how Tommy was punished, youthful reader!

"O, what shall I do, good fairy! Don't take them, and I'll promise you anything."

"Now I begin to think you are penitent. I'll let your mother live, and—"

"O, I'm so glad! I'll do anything to mind her, and give all my playthings to my little sister, and—"

"You'll promise me you'll never speak another harsh word again?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Now remember it well. You've made your promise to your mother."

Tommy looked up, and in the vanishing face he recognized his mother, and—awoke.

He felt Bridget shaking him, and so he got up.

Though years have passed, Tommy still remembers his dream. His mother lived to a good old age, and he was very kind to her and sister.

TRAVELLING BY STAGE.

BY MARY RILEY SMITH.

"ALL aboard!" roared Dick the driver, from his high perch upon the top of the Youckton stage. He was growing impatient.

"In a minute, sir." It was a young voice, sweet and mellow, and hinted of a rare ripe mouth and colorful lips. The only occupant of the coach, a gentleman of thirty-two or thereabouts, leaned forward and looked at the girl from the window. She was just stepping from the porch of a little cream-colored house with red roses growing all over it, and was tidily arrayed in a cool *ecru* linen dress, and a golden brown straw turban around which was twisted a scarf of blue grenadine. In her hands, which were encased in No. 6 brown kids, she carried a travelling sack, a shawl and a book. The gentleman, who had been occupying the back seat, gallantly transferred her trappings therefrom, and left it at her disposal. She took it with a pleasant shy nod, and a half smile. The driver touched the sleepy horses with his long whip, and cried, "Go, on, boys!" And such a clatter of rickety machinery in the shape of wheels and axletree was never heard, except by the poor unfortunates who have been doomed to ride in old Dick's stage. In a few minutes the little cream-colored house with its garniture of roses, lay away back over the hills and out of sight.

For a few miles the girl kept her eyes occupied with the objects that lay beyond the stage windows. Here a comfortable farmhouse, there a broad stretch of meadow-lands, with dark thick woods in the background, and white fleecy sheep huddled together in the cool shadows of its borders. Sometimes a shallow stream, like a band of blue ribbon, twisted its shining lengths through the pastures and wheatfields, and the eyes that found beauty in nature's fresh changing face could always be gratified on this quiet country road, through the dust and dandelions of which, the old stage had jogged along every summer for fifteen years.

The indolent kine fed in the meadow-lands looked up quietly, as the vehicle went by. The birds were all a flutter in the thick boughs overhead; the sunlight shimmered down in warm yellow spots on the yet wet grass; and as Geraldine Soule leaned from

the window, watching the children that nestled in groups on the grass by the roadside, she thought she had never seen a fairer morning.

They had ridden several miles, and it was nearly noon, when the driver halted, loosened his horses' bridles and let them drink from the old wooden trough that stood by the roadside. A quick wind sprang up and caught Geraldine's veil as she looked out, tossing the light fabric into a tree near by, where it caught, and fluttered and clung like a blue silken flag, to the discomfiture of the girl not less than of the clumsy stiff-jointed driver, who watched the bit of gossamer with an amusing perplexity troubling the broad proportions of his ruddy face.

"It's pesky unlucky, mum; I'm afraid it's a gone thing, sure, for since I had the rheumatiz I haint much on the climb. I'm sorry, miss, fac'."

The man in the stage looked up from his book, and discovered the situation.

"Will you permit *me*, miss?" said he, with an amused smile, and in a moment he had mounted the tree, detached the refractory veil, and handed it to the owner with a polite bow. The horses had lifted their heads with satisfied appetites from the trough, and the old vehicle rattled on again.

The matter of the veil had broken the silence inside the stage. The man lifted the book from the girl's knee, and rustled its pages.

"You are reading Richelieu?"

"Yes, for the hundredth time, I guess. I like it much;" said the young lady, warmly.

Then followed a discussion of its merits, and soon their talk drifted into a hundred channels; poetry, music, the commune, until the two had forgotten they had never met before. In the eyes of this man, there seemed to be a strange fascination in the quick changes of her expressive face, and the wonderful glow and color that lit up her countenance as she talked; and he found himself in an especially amiable mood over his good fortune in having so interesting a travelling companion on his stage ride.

Let me tell you a little about him, while he entertains his companion with talk about

the Yo-semite, among whose glories he had lingered for many weeks the year previous. Everett Alger was on his way to Sedgenville. Years before, he had stumbled upon a correspondence with a lady there whom he had never met. She was a contributor to the columns of the L—— magazine, a periodical which he assisted in editing. The woman's letters were charming, and evinced a degree of culture, and earnestness, and soul, which made him unwilling to give up the pleasure they conferred, and he had begged their continuance. He had asked for her miniature, and when it came he could never make it seem that it and the author of the irresistible letters were one. It was a handsome face but empty, soulless. Once, when writing to her, he was bold enough to tell her that he could not reconcile the two; but she only laughed in reply, assured him the picture was like its original, and that she must give check to her pen if it was showing her under false colors, and Everett Alger folded the letter with a little regret, and almost wished his fair correspondent had never sent the pictured likeness of her face.

A little business matter had called him within eighty miles of the woman's home; and an irresistible force he could scarcely account for, had impelled him to step aside from his homeward route, and visit her, even though the gratification of the whim involved a troublesome ride in the vehicle before alluded to. It hadn't proved such a cheerless ride, so far, for here was this girl, young, at most not over twenty-three, and with a nameless charm about her that didn't come from her eloquent eyes, her abundant yellow hair, nor her delicate, handsomely-cut mouth. It was back of all this. He had felt it when he first saw her from the coach window. There was a swift magnetic undercurrent, that seemed to undulate back and forth between their two souls in subtle electric flashes, and affected him much as Miss Sage's letters had done.

"If *she* only had such a face!" said he, to himself, looking straight upon the pages of his book. "Miss Sage's letters and Geraldine Soule's face! Odd I should get such a notion in my head." And he shut the book to look out on the landscape.

It was six o'clock, and the sun was getting low. A wonderful, inky cloud was plashing dark spots all over the red gold of the sunset, and blotting the fair beautiful west. By-and-by the lights began to flash out in the cot-

tage windows, and Geraldine grew tired and restless from her long day's ride, in spite of her pleasant company. He noticed her frequent outlooks as the dark began to settle down upon them, and said:

"I haven't thought to ask you where you stop; I get out at Sedgenville."

"Indeed! So do I!" said the girl, in a surprised tone.

"I am glad, at any rate, to have company over such a road. I'm afraid the rain will overtake us soon, though. See that fearful cloud!"

Geraldine pressed her face against the window and looked out. A keen flash and a sharp report of thunder made her cry out in a terrified manner, and shrink back upon the cushions in the dark corner of the stage, trembling and frightened. The gentleman laughed at her, but it was only to put her fears to sleep. The big drops came plashing against the dusty window, and the air was growing chill and uncomfortable. Mr. Alger remembered his companion's light linen dress, and touching her shawl which lay upon the seat, said:

"Wrap it around you; your dress is thin, and the air is damp!" The frightened girl folded it over her shoulders without a word.

O, how it rained! and back and forth through the angry sky the lightnings shot their arrows of flame at each other; and the heavy booms of "Heaven's Artillery" sounded through the earth, and made women fall upon their faces in terror. Then there came one flash, keener, crueller than the rest. Like a blade of fire, as it was, it divided the trunk of a sturdy oak as though it had been wax. With a crash the grand old tree fell—part of it to the right, part to the left; and the steady, tired old stage horses saw it, saw the fiery messenger that did the work, heard the crash and the peal, and mad with fright plunged forward, dragging the reins from the driver's hands, and throwing him from his box!

Everett Alger, sitting inside, took it all in at once, and so did Geraldine. She reached her hands to him, imploringly, as the weak always appeal to the strong, but she could not speak. By the frequent flashes the man saw that her face was livid, and looked like that of one just come back from the grave. He seated himself beside her, fixed her firmly in his hold, and held her in her seat.

"Sit still as possible, my dear friend, and keep cool! I will do all I can, but just now

that is nothing at all. The road is smooth in this locality, and God may send us help in a way we do not guess!"

There they sat, those two helpless creatures, utterly powerless to put aside the terrible fate that seemed pressing upon them. Far away from house or habitation of any sort, and shut in a living tomb, what wonder that the girl shuddered, and covered her face to shut out the fearful picture! and all this time the mad horses were plunging on, on, God only knew where! It seemed ages to the imprisoned man and woman, when there was a sudden halt, throwing them forward, and nearly upsetting the coach. Everett Alger understood the reason better than the girl who cried out in terror. The horses had encountered some obstacle which had checked them in their terrible race. Quick as thought, he wrenched open the heavy door and leaped out, but Geraldine clung to his arm with the grasp of despair.

"O, don't leave me in here, I pray! The horses may start again; please do not leave me alone!"

"I will not leave you, poor girl. I will care for you with my life. But we are safe now. God has helped us in a way we did not guess. One of the horses has a leg broken."

The horses had run upon a clump of undergrowth, their feet had become tangled in the reins, and one of them had fallen to the ground, and lay helpless with a broken limb.

Mr. Alger's first care was to detach the tired panting animals from the vehicle, and make Geraldine comfortable upon its cushions. It was now about midnight, and they would doubtless be compelled to remain there till morning; so he arranged the shawl as best he could for the girl's comfort, settled himself in one corner of the carriage, and prepared to wait. There was no sleep for either of them; the shock had been too great for them to compose themselves there easily, so the young man talked to Geraldine of many things, to divert her mind from her narrow escape, and lastly told her something about Miss Sage; of her pleasant pen-pictures in the *L—* magazine, of her inimitable letters, and the charm they had for him, and that now he was on his way to make a little friendly call upon the lady, when he should see her for himself.

The girl listened intently, and even laughed a little low laugh now and then, and it was surprising how quickly the hours sped away, and the first gray light began to flick the

east; and, by the sounds of awakening life, and the lifting of the dark shadows that had wrapped them about, they knew the morning had come. After all, barring their fright, it hadn't been a very wretched night to the two occupants of the stage.

It was about six o'clock, and the birds were looking for their breakfasts and the sun was lighting the grand old world, when our friends heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and the roll of wheels, and looking around, there was old Dick, their driver, safe and sound, coming to search for his team.

"Well! well!" cried he, his sleepy eyes opening wide in astonishment. "I want to know if that's you! I've been looking all along for pieces of you, and rather thought I'd have hard work to put you together again. Fact is, I hadn't an arthly idee but I'd have to pick you up with a spoon! You didn't see me come down from my perch, did you? First I knowed, I was settin' on the grass by the side of the road. Mighty bad for the rheumatiz, I can tell you. Well! well!"

Then followed a series of lamentations over the fate of poor old Jim, the off horse, when finally it was decided that Dick should take our travellers in his wagon to Sedgenville, which was the next town.

It was one of the rarest of mornings. The rain of the night before had washed the dust from the forest leaves and left them glossy and green. Over it all lay the great waveless sea of blue, and away to the northward the mountains lifted their purple tops, and the whole earth seemed fresh from the Creator's hands. Everett Alger drank it all in, and thought that life had never seemed a grander gift to him than now, and all the horror of the night before was like a dream that would pass from his memory. Then he thought of the girl who was riding by his side, and wondered if he should ever look on her face again after they had said "good-by," and a keen pain stung him as he thought of it.

"And yet, what is she to me? Only the acquaintance of a day, thrown in my way by circumstance, and whom I have no right to expect will ever think of me again after to-day." And he shut his lips together very hard, and tried to shut out the unpleasant thought thereby.

The wagon halted at the inn at Sedgenville, where Everett Alger was to get out, and his overcoat and satchel were deposited in the hands of a porter who came out to receive

them. Geraldine was to go further, half a mile or so, and Everett looked at her with a vague regret and pain in his eyes, and held out his hand. She dropped her own within its clasp, gave him a pleasant look out of her clear eyes, murmured a wish for his success in finding Miss Sage, then said good-by in the sweetest voice possible.

"Confound Miss Sage!" thought the young man, bitterly. "I've half a mind not to go to see her at all. I'm ashamed to own it, but I'm carried away quite by this girl whom I never saw until yesterday. It isn't her face that's done it, it's—it's—I'm blamed if I *know* what it is! and she didn't even so much as ask me to call before I left town, which she *might* have done, in consideration of my efforts to make her comfortable last night, and now it's all up, and we've seen the last of each other."

By this time Geraldine and her talkative companion were out of sight beyond the hill. She didn't even look back to give him a pleasant nod or smile, and Everett turned on his heel and went in to breakfast.

He thought better of his resolution not to visit Miss Sage, however, and after dinner attired himself in a fresh suit, and set out in the direction she had indicated in one of her letters. She did not expect him that day, what if he should find her away? The fact is, he was very indifferent about it, his mind was full of Geraldine Soule. He was more than half in love with her; and what seemed so strange to him, he felt as if he had known her for years. He seemed conscious of her sentiments and opinions before she uttered them. He couldn't account for it, at all.

A great shaggy dog came to meet him with a low growl, as he unlatched the gate and walked through the fragrant borders of pinks and lilacs, up to the door of the great stone house where Miss Sage lived. A broad roomy porch, with heavy square pillars, and vines trailing over them, invited him into its shade, and two or three easy-chairs tempted his tired feet to stop and rest. Withal, it was a cheerful, inviting place.

A stout German girl with a broad good-natured face, admitted him, received his card, and left him in the large cool parlor till Miss Sage should make her appearance. What a cheerful room it was! Two broad windows lighted it from the east, and a large bay-window in the south was full of blossoming flowers, and a canary hung among them. Beyond this window, lay the broad lawn

with its border of chestnut trees, and away in the distance, where the eye could just catch its shining, a splendid river crept along, and small white cottages sunned themselves on its banks, and the slender church spires leaned their white needles against the clear blue sky.

Everett was admiring all this, when the door opened quietly behind him. He caught the soft rustle of muslin, and turned to meet the friend he had never seen. A gleam of tender smiling eyes, and pale gold hair; a glimpse of a soft white robe, and ribbons of dainty delicate blue, and Geraldine Soule stood before him!

"Miss Soule!" The young man was bewildered and perplexed.

"Yes, and Bertha Sage, too!" laughed the girl, her sweet face changing from white to red, and from red to white again.

"O, I am so glad! I felt that it *ought* to be so!" And the young man clung to her hand unconsciously, and stared at her in unbounded amazement. "And you left me without even asking me to call!" said he, reproachfully.

"Yes! because I knew I should have the pleasure without the asking," archly replied Geraldine. "Don't you see I had the advantage over you? I knew you were Everett Alger ever since you talked to me about yourself in the old coach last night."

There was a rare welcome and a great joy written all over the girl's fair face, and her companion saw it, and was more than glad.

And all through that summer's afternoon they sat and talked, not as strangers talk, but as if they had seen each other soul to soul, through the three years during which their letters had sped back and forth from each to each.

And Geraldine told him how she had sent him a picture of a friend, and not of herself, and begged him to forgive the deception, and before they knew it, the sun had gone down, and the fair sweet face of the moon looked in at the great windows, and Geraldine thought she had never seen such a lovely night in her life, before.

And Everett Alger thought so too.

It was three weeks before he could arrange his affairs to leave, and when he did, Geraldine stood in her window, waving her hand till he was out of sight, then she sat down and twirled the new flashing ring that she was not yet used to, round and round on her finger, and sobbed outright.

Everett Alger went home and wrote a long article upon the superior advantages of stage travelling over any other mode, and his old partner read it in the next issue, pushed his glasses up over his eyes, and blurted out somewhat pettishly:

“The man’s an idiot!” Such an insane article will ruin the magazine!”

This was in June. In October Everett Alger went to Sedgewille again, and Geraldine came away with him, in a pretty new travelling-dress, and wearing a blue grenadine veil.



TRIED BY FIRE.

BY MRS. R. B. EDSON.

WHEN, under the pressure of some sudden or seductive temptation, a man—a strong man, perhaps—goes down, the air is full of reproaches and marvels at his weakness, or wickedness. Every one is sure *he* could have withstood the temptation, and talks volubly of what he should do in such and such cases, were he in such and such a one's place. Doubtless he is honest in his belief, for very few thoroughly know themselves. In the ordinary course of events, no great temptation arising, they are moral and upright. They get a reputation for goodness, and bear a fair character before the community. By-and-by some insidious temptation rises in their way; they turn away from it, they

struggle against it, they bring all their previous good character to bear upon it, but still it stands in the way and confronts them, and they tremble as they find a hitherto unsuspected element in their nature responding to it. God pity them if they fall!—their fellows will not. All the bitterness of struggle, all the passionate depths of anguish and travail of spirit, and alas! all the fierce after-sting of regret and remorse, are quite lost sight of in the sweeping denunciations of those who *have never been tempted*.

I would not be understood as offering excuse or palliation for wrong doing. Sin cannot be too strongly denounced; but in view of the weakness of human nature, and our

own liability to error, might we not be more lenient towards the sinner, even while condemning his sin? Are the two so closely allied as to be utterly inseparable in our thoughts? Might not the return to virtue and integrity be made easier by a more liberal infusion of Christian charity in the popular heart, and thousands, who have taken the "first false step," saved from the easy, downward way? What is the true course for Christian men and women to take in this matter? Shall they stand aside, rejoicing in their own strength, and purity, and inflexible virtue, thanking God that "they are not as other men are, or even these publicans," or, is there a more tender and Christly way for dealing with the erring?

I beg that none, in their haste to "get at the story," will skip the above because it has the look of sermonizing. They are serious questions, it is true. That they appeal to every community, and touch both the romance and reality of life, is equally true.

I do not imagine Grantley to have been much above the average of New England towns in regard to virtue and religion. It had its scores of pious people who frowned upon all not of their peculiar stamp and superscription; it had also its fair quota of scoffers who lived, like parasites, on the shortcomings of those same pious ones. It had, like other small towns, its petty aristocracy, its middle and lower classes; and, taken altogether, was perhaps a fair sample of the majority of moderate-sized New England towns.

Alfred Lindsey had a good deal to contend with from the start. The class of people are not yet extinct who believe it impossible for any good thing to come out of Nazareth. There were those who believed it the wildest recklessness in James Sherwood in taking a Lindsey into his store, even in the irresponsible situation of errand boy. It had been more a matter of impulse with him, than from any deliberate benevolence he felt towards young Lindsey, or the class he represented.

I do not mean to insinuate that the Lindseys were sinners above other men. Indeed, I rather incline to the opinion that, according to their gifts and opportunities, they were full as good as their betters. To be sure their gifts, pecuniarily considered, were exceedingly small, and they were not the sort of people to *make* opportunities.

Had they been fortunate enough to have been born rich, they would have made good-natured, respectable citizens, but not men

and women of energy and enterprise. There was, perhaps, half a dozen families of them, and all singularly alike in character and disposition. If there be one thing above another a genuine New Englander thoroughly despises, it is shiftlessness and indolence. In a country where every man is expected to invent at least a patent gridiron, or an "improvement" on one already invented, people of the Lindsey pattern are at a sorry discount.

For three generations the Lindseys had been "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Some of them had been offered opportunities of becoming artisans, but so long as they got enough to eat, and an extra shirt in case of emergency, they were content to let well enough alone. They never went to church, and so had no need of fine clothes. They had very little literary taste—the annual Town Report and Farmer's Almanac furnished their year's reading. This again was not particularly expensive. They had no foolish pride of appearance, and old hats and coats, though a trifle less transparent, had the merit of costing less than window glass. They believed in taking the world easy. They fulfilled, literally, the command to "take no thought for the morrow." They worked barely enough to keep them out of the alms-house, yet were forever hovering on its verge. People said it was "no use trying to help them," though I am rather doubtful about the experiment ever having been tried.

Up to his twelfth year Alfred Lindsey had followed in the steps of his predecessors. He had lived principally in the streets, picking up occasional jobs of work and a pretty good knowledge of human nature. No one thought to look under the tattered hat, or they might have seen a pair of brilliant gray eyes looking keenly out at the world—the busy, restless, struggling world, upon which he was only a fungus growth. Some such thoughts crept into his brain, sometimes. A longing to crowd himself into the busy ring and fight his way with the rest sometimes came over him, keeping him awake for hours after his two brothers, George and Ben, were asleep. But there never seemed to be an opening. No one saw him, apparently, and so he waited till one day Fate cleft the way for him.

An unusually heavy fall of snow, solidified by frequent rains falling upon and freezing in it, had distinguished the winter. The streams were already swollen beyond precedent, when a strong south wind, accompanied by a heavy rain, set in. Mr. Sherwood's residence was

situated on a little knoll, below which the river bent abruptly, broadening to a beautiful pond, dotted in summer with snowy lilies, and in winter by gay parties of skaters.

"Papa, isn't the river rising?" Corrie Sherwood asked, pausing at the door, on her way to her chamber.

"A little, I presume; but it won't rise high enough to reach you, little one, if you hurry off to bed," the father answered, smiling at the flushed little face, looking out of a tangle of soft chestnut hair.

"You are quite sure, papa?"

"Sure! Why, Corraline, what puts such absurd thoughts in your usually wise little head? The river never rises half way up the knoll. Go to bed without any fears, my child."

"The river does roar fearfully, James," Mrs. Sherwood said, going to the door and opening it a little way.

"Well, my dear, it's chained fast to its bed, and can't get away," he answered, with the air of a man who is conscious of having said a clever thing.

Mr. Sherwood was *the* merchant of Grantley. There were several grocers, and simple "store-keepers," but only one Mahomet. The others were respectable citizens, merely—Mr. Sherwood eminent and honored. All the "best" people in Grantley—I use the word in its social, not its moral sense—patronized his house. If he sometimes took advantage of his popularity and respectability, and sold the same quality of goods at a slight advance on the other Grantley dealers, it did not lessen his sales. The prestige of trading at Sherwood's was worth a small percentage.

"I wish you would go to the door and look out before retiring," his wife continued, strangely oblivious of her lord's cleverness.

"You and Corrie are nervous," he said, rising.

Standing on the broad, polished granite steps of his elegant residence, Mr. Sherwood looked down, in a double sense, at the low, tumble-down hovel of Tom Lindsey. It stood at the edge of the pond, in close proximity to the old "grist mill." The light shone out from one of the dilapidated windows, revealing a wild, turbid sea of broken ice and floating boards.

"I shouldn't be surprised if it carried off Tom's hut. I'm sure I hope it will!" Mr. Sherwood said, coming back to his warm, luxurious room. "The pond is full of floating boards, so I suppose Morton has suffered some. But he piled his boards on the river's

edge to save storage. But I'm not afraid of its injuring me, and other people must look out for themselves;" with which quite unheard-of sentiment Mr. Sherwood, merchant, retired to his virtuous repose.

"Papa, papa, wake up! Allie Lindsey is out here in a boat. Their house is carried away; and O papa, the water is all over the meadow!"

Mr. Sherwood sprang hastily to his feet, thoroughly awake.

"How came you to know about this, Corrie?" he asked, as he hastily dressed.

"Allie woke me, shouting under the windows. I don't think I was sleeping very soundly, papa."

"Where is the boy, now?"

"Gone back with his mother—O, I didn't tell you his father, and George and Ben were carried away in the house. He managed to get into a boat, and took his mother out of the window, but the ice got between them and he couldn't save the rest. Ben jumped out into the water, but just as Alfred was reaching to draw him into the boat, a great piece of ice came crashing against it, carrying down poor Ben, and crushing some of the fingers on Alfred's hand. Then he saw how the water was up round our house, and he rowed clear up here, with that wounded hand, too, to tell us of the danger. Isn't he a real hero, papa?" the bright eyes flashing out their admiration.

"Yes, Corrie," he answered, promptly, "a true hero."

It was hard work, but by daylight the cows, horses and swine had been driven to a place of safety. Had the work been delayed two hours longer three thousand dollars worth of stock would have perished in the waters. The water was nearly five feet deep in front of the house, and the broad, beautiful meadows stretching back to the wood was one broad lake of foamy waters, when the gray light of morning broke over the scene.

Alfred Lindsey completed his bravery by rowing against the current nearly a mile, and procuring men and boats to take away the beleaguered family.

Poor Tom Lindsey and his two boys were washed up on the meadows, crushed almost past recognition by the ice and timber. Only Alfred and his mother, a weak, fair-faced woman utterly devoid of ambition or energy, were left, and they utterly destitute and shelterless.

"I ought to do something for Alf," Mr.

Sherwood said, after the excitement and peril were beginning to subside in Grantley, and he had ventured back to his house again. "I hardly know what is best. Giving to the Lindseys is like pouring water into a sieve."

"Why don't you hire him, papa?" Corrie asked, soberly. "You could pay him more than he earned if you thought it was right, you know."

And this was how it happened that Alfred Lindsey became a clerk—for he was soon promoted from his original post of errand boy—in the highly respectable mercantile establishment of Sherwood & Son.

As I said before, young Lindsey had much to contend against. First came his own long-seated indolence. He had never been confined to labor, and though his resolution was strong to succeed, the flesh was sometimes weak. His mother, grown weak and fretful, grew also selfishly unreasonable, and instead of helping him forward, was a perpetual drag and hindrance to his efforts, by her demands on his time and purse. With their improved finances she had developed a weak vanity for dress, and upbraided Alfred that he could not indulge her in her rapidly increasing wants. Then there were the prejudices of all Grantley to overcome.

The thriftlessness, and indolence, and impotence of a score or more of uncles and cousins was a continual "old man of the sea" about his neck. No one thought to honor him the more because of them, recognizing the merit that had vindicated itself despite untoward circumstances. He was "a Lindsey," and that fact was never lost sight of, but continually urged against him, as in itself something too monstrous for forgiveness. We all know how the stigma of a name will cling to one, particularly in a country town, where every one's antecedents are thoroughly known, and how hard it is for one of a proscribed family to rise above the level, or pass the bounds society and common opinion have set for him.

It argued therefore no ordinary strength of character when at twenty-one Alfred Lindsey had so far overcome and lived down the prejudices of his townsmen as to be admitted—still a little reluctantly, but yet admitted—to be a young man of ability and promise.

From the first Robert Sherwood had been Alfred's firm friend. Five years his senior, with fine natural abilities, and a superior education, it is easy to see the great help he could be to a boy like young Lindsey, if he

chose. He did so choose. He spent his evenings in teaching him those studies which he had himself acquired at great expense, and rejoiced enthusiastically when the pupil's thought sometimes outstripped the teacher's. He braved even his father's displeasure, by recognizing him as his social equal upon every possible occasion, and by his friendship and countenance forced others to.

"If I am anything, it is you who have made me," Alfred said, his lips trembling in spite of him, as Robert Sherwood put a paper in his hand on his twenty-first birthday, declaring him a junior partner in the great house of Sherwood & Son.

"Nonsense! You've earned the compliment—for it's not much more, you have got to put work instead of money into the firm, and I know we shall be the gainers)—fully and faithfully. I hope, of course, it will be better for you, but it's no more than fair to tell you that things don't look just as I wish they did, for your sake, particularly. I'd like to promise you a larger income than I dare."

"I had not thought of the income," he answered, earnestly.

"You are more unselfish than I," he replied, a slight color rising to his forehead. Adding, after a little pause, "I wish I had had the good fortune to have been born poor. The unlimited use of money is little better than a curse to a boy."

"It did not spoil you, at least."

"It entailed a curse that will follow me to my grave!" he said, vehemently. "It has made it a necessity—it has fitted a yoke upon my manhood, and I cannot break it! Well, perhaps it will all come out right—I mean that it shall," he added, earnestly, his fine face a trifle clouded.

"If you are in any sort of trouble—now, or ever—where I can serve you, I will do it gladly, even if it costs me my life, or what is more, my good name," was Lindsey's impulsive answer.

"I hope we shall be reduced to no such desperate strait as that, my dear fellow," he replied, smiling, "but your good-will is just as truly appreciated. By the way, I suppose you received Corrie's note?"

"Yes, but I don't think I had better come," coloring vividly.

"Not come! Why, it is got up expressly in your honor, as I read at once through that transparent little sister of mine. I would like to see you try to settle it with her, if you slighted her invitation."

"I am sorry to say it, because I know it will pain you," Lindsey said, hesitatingly; "but I am quite sure it would be more satisfactory if I absent myself. Don't think I mind it, it is very natural, and I can easily make an excuse that—"

"You mean that it would be more satisfactory to my father, I suppose, Lindsey?" he interrupted, gravely.

"I think so, yes."

"But am I of no account? And Corrie—why the girl would cry herself sick over the disappointment! You are a most wonderful hero in her eyes, Alf. Her worship dates back to the time of the flood—the flood on the Connecticut, I mean," he said, laughing to cover his companion's embarrassment.

"Miss Sherwood has been very kind to remember a poor fellow like me, at all," he replied, just a little stiffly. Then, his face softening, "I won't mind, though, if it will be any pleasure to *you* to have me come."

"It is not simply my pleasure that I am considering—you know it would be that—but the right of the thing. I do not consider one man's prejudices of birth should stand in another's way, a barrier between him and his rightful position. My father understands that you are to come."

"Very well; it is settled, then," Lindsey replied, turning to his desk.

But all day the thought annoyed and troubled him—the thought that he should not be quite welcome in the house of his wealthy senior. He was not at all blinded by the partnership just conferred on him. He knew quite well whom to thank for that. Besides he was proud, if he was "only a Lindsey." He knew very well that he should receive cool looks and scanty recognition from a portion of the guests. They were too well-bred to be positively rude; but there is the quiet ignoring of one's presence—the grouping together, leaving one quite alone and aside, with a score of other little petty circumstances, that tend to make the prescribed one uncomfortable. He expected to be subject to any or all of these annoyances, but because Robert desired it he would submit to the ordeal. Possibly, too, though I cannot say, considering that he did not himself admit it, the pretty pink-tinted note which Corrie had sent him had some influence in his decision.

Through all the nine years since that night of storm and terror, Corrie Sherwood had been different to him from other girls. He

blushed, even now, at the remembrance of the tearful kiss she had given him when he had lifted her light form out of the boat, in the gray dawn of that wild, frightful February morning. To be sure it was but a childish impulse of gratitude, and neither of them was more than a child, but he had never forgotten! The memory had been, simple as it was, a strong incentive to effort. Not that any presumptive or sentimental passion had grown out of it. He had never dreamed of being in love, in the received sense of the term, with his employer's daughter; yet her smile was brighter than sunshine to him, and her friendship the one thing desirable in life.

Contrary to young Lindsey's expectations, he was cordially received; the fact of his admittance into the firm acting a most potent open sesame into that mystical circle known as "good society." Mr. Sherwood, too, met him more cordially than he had expected, though still with a little stiff, patronizing air, which said, quite as plainly as words, "You are very welcome among us, and under the circumstances have a right here, but I beg you to remember that you are not exactly of us—you understand."

But Robert and Corrie paid him the most flattering attentions, and as he promenaded up and down the long, brilliantly-lighted rooms, with Corrie Sherwood's fair hand resting lightly on his arm, and her beautiful eyes lifted trustingly to his face, he forgot all annoyance and discomfort, and lived only in the enchanted present.

But Fate, which takes a malicious pleasure in making people miserable, dropped a grain of bitterness into this cup of sweetness. It was near the close of the evening's entertainment, and Lindsey had sat down for a moment near the window. The blinds were closed, but the window itself was open. Two gentlemen were talking outside. The first voice he did not at once recognize, only the words sent the blood in a quick wave from his heart to his face.

"Ah, Sherwood," the man said, with a short laugh, "everybody understands the move, as cleverly as it has been done. Of course you are expected to deny it; but any one with half an eye can see where the next partnership is to come in."

"By Heaven! Mordaunt, I'll not listen to such senseless talk," cried a quick, passionate voice, which poor Lindsey knew all too well.

"Ah! is that it?" in a surprised tone. "I thought you understood the turn matters

were taking, and took the young fellow into the firm to take the curse off—pardon me for saying it."

"Perhaps you will enlighten me a little in regard to this matter," Mr. Sherwood said, in his haughtiest tone. "It is not possible any one has dared associate my daughter's name with this—this Lindsey!"

"I am sorry I mentioned it, really," Mor-daunt said, apologetically. "It has been thought possible and even probable that Lindsey would some day marry Miss Sherwood. You surely are not blind to the fact that they are very intimate—for *friends*."

"I would sooner see my daughter lying dead, than married to a Lindsey, Mr. Mor-daunt. You can contradict all such shameful rumors," Sherwood replied, coldly.

If the allegation had been true, Alfred Lindsey could scarcely have felt worse, and the evening which had passed so delightfully, set in mortification and sorrow. A weary, restless night followed—a night of discouragement and bitter despair. It is no use, the tempter whispered, try as hard as you may, you will never be anything but "a Lindsey." You might just as well give up the struggle first as last.

The morning found him feverish and nervous. It was later than usual when he went down to the store. Two men were standing on the sidewalk, and when he opened the store followed him in, amusing themselves by sauntering about, looking at the showcases, and apparently making a mental valuation of the contents of the store.

"How long before I could see one of the partners?" one of them asked, sauntering to the door and looking back.

"I am one of the partners," Alfred answered, in a rather ungracious tone.

"Ah! May I ask if it is not something quite recent?"

"It is, sir."

The men glanced at each other, and one said in a low tone, "wait."

"We will come in again. Good-morning, sir," bowing, and passing out as unceremoniously as possible.

It was perhaps half an hour later when Mr. Sherwood, senior, came in, and passed at once to the office. Two hours wore away; a few straggling customers dropped in, and then came the post-boy bringing rather more than his usual complement of letters. Alfred took them into the office at once. Mr. Sherwood was sitting in a listless attitude, his chin rest-

ing on his hand. He sprang up with a little flash of excitement in his face as Lindsey came up to the desk, and took the letters with a sort of nervous clutch, running them over rapidly in his hand till he came to one superscribed in a coarse, scrawling hand. Tossing the rest on the table he tore this open with hands that trembled visibly. It was very brief, for he crumpled it in his hand almost instantly, and sank back in his chair with a low groan.

"Take me home," he said, in a hoarse whisper, as Alfred held a glass of water to his white, drawn lips.

A carriage was at once brought to the back entrance, and leaning on Lindsey's arm, he walked out to it, and was driven speedily homeward, leaving his bewildered junior in a state of doubt and perplexity.

Slowly the hours dragged away, and the bell of the office clock rang out sharply—one sharp, ringing stroke. One o'clock! No word or hint from the great silent house on the knoll—not so much as an open door or blind all that long, long forenoon! Alfred Lindsey grew positively nervous watching it through the restless leaves of the beeches that ran in a slender zone about the soft, velvety knoll. Had some fateful hand fallen upon and paralyzed every living thing? The suspense was becoming intolerable, when the front door opened, and Robert came swiftly down the street. Lindsey stood in the door awaiting his arrival, a strange, overwhelming sense of danger shutting down upon him. He leaned forward eagerly, scanning his face, trying to get some hint of the story he felt lay behind its immobility and pallor.

"Ah, Lindsey! how hungry you look! Don't devour a fellow so with your eyes, man," he said, with a laugh, as he came up the steps.

Something in his tone—its lightness, perhaps—jarred upon his highly-strung nerves with such suddenness that it was with difficulty he could repress a cry. A moment, and he had himself in hand, and could laugh at his nervous anxiety.

"I believe I am a little faint," he said, taking up his hat. "I have no recollection of eating any breakfast," his face darkening at the remembrance of what it was that had taken away his appetite, and driven sleep from his pillow.

"You need not hurry back, Lindsey," young Sherwood said, turning over the leaves of a huge ledger, "I am at liberty, and if you

are back by three, the time trade usually sets in, it will be soon enough."

"I have nothing to keep me so long unless I take a row up the river."

"Do, by all means," was the eager answer; "you keep too close indoors. Yes, take a good long row, and don't feel hurried about it."

"Thank you, I believe I should feel better. Do you know," laughing still a little nervously, "I imagined all sorts of terrible things about you up at the house, this forenoon."

"Why?"

The question came sharp and vibrant, and in a voice so strange that Lindsey involuntarily stopped and looked back at the speaker, feeling very much as if he had been hit by some invisible ball. But the face was turned away—it had been all the time—and the leaves of the ledger turned slowly, the white fingers slipping down mechanically. He quite forgot the question for the moment, but presently recollecting, answered:

"Your father was taken ill here this morning, you remember, and I suppose that, added to a sleepless night—"

"You should know nothing of sleepless nights—you who are free from—"

He paused abruptly, and as Alfred did not choose to enlighten him as to the cause of his sleeplessness, there was no more said on the subject, or indeed on any other, for Lindsey went immediately out.

His dinner eaten, he went to the boat-house, but both boats were out. Well, he might as well go back to the store. He would take a stroll down street first, he thought, turning involuntarily in the direction of Mr. Sherwood's. He passed the house, noticing how still everything seemed, and how closely-shut the blinds were. He remembered all at once that he had not asked if Mr. Sherwood was better or worse. He saw Terry Dermott, the gardener, out in the field, and went out to him.

"How is Mr. Sherwood, Terry, better?" he asked, as soon as he could make a break in Terry's oration upon the relative merits of the various fertilizers in the market, and the mode of applying the same.

"Och, and ye must ask somebody else but I," he replied, with a mysterious nod which was very vaguely expressive. "I reckon though he be mighty bad, for there was no dinner ate in the house, only what I ate myself in the pantry, and Miss Corrie's eyes looked as if she had cried a week, when she

came out to ask me to stay about the house—somewhere within call, she said—the afternoon."

"There's something strange about it," Lindsey said, under his breath, the old nervous, uneasy sensation taking possession of him, together with a feeling that he was needed at the store immediately. He had been away scarcely an hour, yet as he walked down the street it was with difficulty he could keep himself from breaking into a run. It seemed as if his feet were made of lead, they dragged so. He had experienced a similar sensation during sleep, but never before in his waking hours.

The store door stood slightly ajar when he came up. He walked directly through to the office. Something told him he would find the door locked, and without trying it he took a duplicate key from his pocket and endeavored to fit it in the lock, but the key on the inside prevented. There was, however, a smothered exclamation, and a sudden rustle of paper, and a voice he scarcely recognized asked, hurriedly:

"Is that you, Lindsey?"

"Yes, open the door, I want to come in," was the quick answer.

"Wait a minute, I am busy."

Lindsey went back to the store, and two ladies coming in, kept him busy perhaps fifteen minutes. At the end of that time, and just as they were passing out, Sherwood came to the door and called him. He was deadly pale and his hands trembled, but there was a firm, hard look about his eyes and mouth which Lindsey had never seen there before.

"I want you to be off for Hartford in the half past five train, Lindsey," he said, in a hurried, nervous way, quite unlike his usual open, calm manner.

"Certainly; but I must know what the trouble is, first. You look like a maniac."

"Do I?" passing his hand hastily across his forehead. "Well, I am not sure but I am—or shall be. You see we are in rather a tight place—if you insist on knowing. A bill for ten thousand dollars worth of goods. It is in the hands of one of the hardest men in existence. He would not hesitate an instant to shut up the store if every dollar was not forthcoming at the precise moment it was due. Five thousand dollars takes every cent of money the firm can command for a week. In this extremity we are obliged to borrow. You are therefore to take this check to

Hartford, get the money, and return immediately."

"Mr. Morrison," Lindsey said, looking at the check.

"Yes; he has accommodated us before, you probably remember."

"I think I once took one of his checks into the bank. A year or more ago, wasn't it?"

"I don't remember. He has helped us several times. I am going down to the house, and will send Terry down with the team. He has got to go down to Windsor Locks, and you can ride down so far with him and take the train from there. I want you to attend to a few small bills that are due. I'll come down to the store again before you leave. By the way," pausing and looking back with his hand on the knob, and speaking cautiously, "I wouldn't say anything to any one, if I were you, about going down to the city."

"Very well," turning and going behind the counter, a troubled, perplexed expression on his face.

Several customers came in, and among them one of the men who had been in to inquire for one of the partners that morning. He said nothing about them, now, however, but bought a pair of gloves, loitering about the store till Terry drove up. Lindsey at once went out, leaving him in the store. Robert had ridden down with Terry, and paused a few moments, giving some additional directions concerning the business at Windsor Locks. Just as he was turning away, the man in the store sauntered leisurely out, bowing coolly to Sherwood as he passed.

"Who is that man?" Lindsey asked. "He came in in company with another man very early this morning and asked to see one of the partners, but he went away without mentioning any business."

"It is Clark Hunter," Sherwood replied, his face darkening.

Lindsey said no more; he understood at once. Clark Hunter had been a former suitor of Miss Austin's, Robert Sherwood's bride elect, and he had heard that there were not very pleasant relations between the rivals.

Terry tried very hard to interest his companion in conversation during the journey to Windsor Locks. At length he hit upon a new topic.

"Some trouble atween yeself and the ould one?" he asked, insinuatingly.

"Mr. Sherwood, do you mean?" looking up, surprised.

"Yes, the ould gentleman. You see I heard

it all last even," looking exceedingly wise. "It was after the company had all gone, and I jist in from the stables, stopped a bit in the kitchen. The doors was open, and I heard the ould chap say, angry like, 'I'll niver have my daughter a-disgracin' herself in such a way,' or somethin' like it."

"What did Miss Sherwood say?" Lindsey asked, involuntarily, yet despising himself for listening to what was not intended for his ears.

"O," said the garrulous Terry, "she said niver a word, only cried as if her little heart would break. And the ould one, says he, 'Lindsey will not come here again, and I forbid you from meeting him, only in the presence of others—'"

"Stop, Terry!" Lindsey interrupted, suddenly. "I have no right to listen, or you to tell me this private conversation."

"But there wasn't only a bit more, and—"

"Not another word!" was the peremptory answer.

"Och, jist as ye likes, though if a nice, swate young leddy said the likes of me, I wouldn't stay away for as many ould ones as there is stars in the skies." And Terry chuckled inwardly at his smartness in putting the gist of Miss Corrie's answer so cleverly.

The business at Windsor Locks was duly attended to, the journey to Hartford made, the check duly presented, and at once cashed without question. The cashier knew young Lindsey, and had that morning seen among the business notices in the "Courant," the advertisement of the new firm. Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Morrison were both old customers at the bank, and had often accommodated each other, but never to quite so large an amount. Morrison was good, however, for five times that amount, and he dismissed all thought of it from his mind.

The evening train found Alfred Lindsey among its passengers. Just as they were on the point of starting a young lady touched his arm timidly. He looked up, and instantly his face flushed scarlet.

"Mr. Lindsey, pray pardon me, but I am alone, and I suppose you are going to Grantley?" said a soft, hesitating voice.

Alfred arose hastily, and amid a little confusion on both sides—more than there was any apparent cause for—Miss Annie Morrison was seated beside him.

"I was so pleased when I saw you," she said—the faintest bit of an accent on the "you"—"for I'm a perfect coward about

riding alone at night. I missed the other train, and if I had not feared mother would be alarmed about me, should not come to-night at all. I am so glad now that I did!" And she settled herself cosily down beside Lindsey, who most cordially echoed the last sentence.

Ever since Alfred Lindsey could remember, Annie Morrison had been the most beautiful and wonderful of creatures to his fancy. He had never touched her hand, or sat beside her, before—he had never expected so much happiness—and it is no marvel that the moments flew, and all the trouble and perplexity of the day were forgotten in the sweet delirium of the moment.

"I read something in the Hartford papers about you," she said, just before they reached Grantley. "Father said a year ago that Mr. Sherwood ought to take you into the firm. He didn't know it when he went away."

"Your father gone away!" Lindsey exclaimed, so suddenly that she gave a quick start, laying her hand on his arm.

"O Alfred, how you startled me!" she said, withdrawing it with a vivid blush.

"Pray pardon me," he stammered, between two contending emotions, of joy and alarm. "I had not heard your father was away—when did he go?"

"Yesterday morning. I went as far as Hartford with him. He has gone out to Uncle Charles's in Pennsylvania."

A terrible crushing sensation almost took his breath away—how came Robert Sherwood by that check?

A moment's reflection, however, served to allay the fearful suspicion that had forced itself upon him. Knowing of the impending emergency, he had doubtless procured it several days before; but, in spite of this reasoning, he felt uneasy, and the strange illness of Mr. Sherwood, and Robert's subsequent unusual behaviour—the anxiety to get him out of the way, the locked door, the rustle of paper—all combined to fill him with a vague sense of apprehension. Even Annie Morrison's sweet face was for the moment quite forgotten in the fever of emotion.

"Grantley!" called the conductor, putting his head in at the door.

Lindsey sprang up nervously, then colored suddenly as he caught the slightly surprised look in Miss Morrison's face. She followed him out without speaking. The carriage was waiting for her, and Lindsey went with her, and though there was no particular need, as

the coachman was waiting, handed her in, and heard her low "good-night, Alfred," with a vague impression that it was only a beautiful dream—he had heard that voice so often in dreams.

The carriage had barely turned away when there came a nervous grasp on his shoulder. He turned, and by the dim light of the swinging lantern saw Robert Sherwood. Was it fancy, or did the pale rays of the lantern give his face that livid, unnatural look?

"How came you with *her*?" he asked, in a nervous whisper.

"If you mean Miss Morrison, she came from Hartford in the train, and being alone, kindly accepted my escort."

"You said nothing to her about—about *that*?" lowering his voice still more.

"I did not trouble Miss Morrison with business matters," was the rather cool answer.

"Thank you, Alf," in a relieved tone. "I might have known I could depend on your sagacity, but this business has made me nervous, I think. Once clear of this snag, and we'll have smooth sailing again, I hope. You see if it got out that we were so short, every petty creditor would be down on us, and our credit would suffer irretrievably."

"You did not tell me that Mr. Morrison had left town," Lindsey said, as calmly as he could.

"Didn't I? Yes; gone West for a month," he answered, carelessly.

There was no more to be said without revealing his suspicions, and the possibility that they were unjust and unfounded kept him silent. The money was given into Sherwood's hands, and the note duly paid the next day.

Mr. Sherwood still remained ill—at least he was not seen out. Three days had passed—three days of evident anxiety and expectancy on the part of young Sherwood, who now remained almost constantly in the store, watching the mails with feverish eagerness. The morning of the fourth day Lindsey noticed among the letters one with the peculiar scrawling hand he had remarked before—the one had such a remarkable effect on Mr. Sherwood. He observed that Robert grew a trifle pale when he saw it, and that his hands trembled when he tore open the envelop, but he was not prepared for the bitter groan that burst from his white lips as they syllabled the one word, "ruined!"

Lindsey slipped to the door and turned the

key. He would not be interrupted now—he must know all.

"Robert—Mr. Sherwood," he said, firmly, coming and standing before him, "I have a right to know what this means, and I must."

"It means that we are all beggars—"

"Yes," he interrupted, "I understand that, only tell me it is nothing worse. That check of Morrison's—"

"I meant to pay it, God knows, Lindsey!" he exclaimed, covering his face with his hands. "I expected to have the money to return to the bank long before his return."

"He did not give you the check, then?"

"We had some of his blank checks, and I—O my God!"

"Enough, I understand," Lindsey interrupted, strongly moved by his companion's anguish.

After a while, Sherwood controlled himself enough to tell the story. Some six months before, a friend had induced his father to invest heavily in a new oil company just beginning operations under the most flattering prospects. At the same time, ignorant of his father's investment, he had himself bought one hundred shares in another company whose promises were even more flattering than the other. This left them very short of funds, and the bill just paid was for goods bought on six months' credit, contrary to their usual custom, but made necessary by the circumstances. The first three months things looked favorable, and under the prospect of success other debts were incurred. Latterly—say for the last month—rumors of failure in the first-named company had been circulated, and the morning after the party, they had seen in a paper the announcement of the failure, and the flight of the treasurer with what little funds remained over the expenses that had been incurred in what had proved fruitless labor. Still they hoped the story false, as no other had been received from the agent in New York. The morning mail, however, brought one, confirming the newspaper report, and pronouncing it a dead loss to the stockholders. The effect on his father had been such as to nearly deprive him of reason; and his anxiety about Gorham's bill, so near due, drove him wild, and he declared, in a frenzy of passion, that he would never live to be disgraced by having his store closed, or an attachment put on his property by Gorham, who he knew would not hesitate to do it.

In this strait, his father half-crazed, his

mother and sister weeping, and begging him to do something to save them and quiet his father, the temptation to use Morrison's name came to him. He fought against it until he was himself half-distracted, yielding at last, by comforting his conscience with the assurance that Morrison would gladly accommodate them if he was at home.

"God knows, Lindsey, I had never dreamed of such a possibility as this!" he gasped, in a hoarse whisper. "I had invested ten thousand dollars with the prospect of tripling my money in six months. The six months expired yesterday, and I have scarcely slept an hour this week, I have been in such a fever of expectancy. It is all over now! Bentley writes, the whole thing was an enormous swindle, and the sharp fellows who got it up are already on their way to Europe with the money of their dupes; an old, wornout oil well, being all that is left for the stockholders. I dare not tell father—and that check—O my God, I shall go wild!" And springing to his feet he paced the floor in an agony of remorse and despair.

"Why not write to Mr. Morrison at once, telling him the story as you have told it to me. I don't think he would prosecute the case—you could secure him by a mortgage on the store and contents; you say you have accommodated each other."

"I will do so at once. Heaven bless you, Lindsey; I feel new courage already. I can bear the disgrace of bankruptcy—but crime!" shuddering convulsively.

A rap at the door interrupted them. Lindsey turned the key and looked out. The shop boy stood a little in advance of three men, two of them the same who had visited the store the morning after Corraline Sherwood's party. He closed the door behind him and walked forward to meet them.

"We would like to see the senior partner," one of them said, glancing toward the office door.

"Mr. Sherwood is ill at his house, sir," Lindsey returned, quietly.

"Mr. Robert Sherwood, then?"

"He is busy, just now; if you would inform me of your business," Alfred began; but the man interrupted him with a short laugh and an expressive shake of the head.

"Call Mr. Sherwood," Lindsey said, turning to the boy.

Robert came out at once, deadly pale, but calm. He had evidently overheard the conversation, and knowing the voice of the

speaker, divined at once his business. He bowed quietly, and leaning against a pillar, said, in a steady voice:

"You can proceed with your business, gentlemen; I think I anticipate its nature."

The two men exchanged glances, and then made a sign to the third, who took out and read a writ of attachment upon the store and contents, in behalf of Doyle & Hunter, of Hartford, creditors to the firm of Sherwood & Son, for goods to the value of nine hundred dollars. The business concluded, Messrs. Doyle & Hunter turned to go out, leaving the officer in charge of the store.

"I know whom I have to thank for this, Clark Hunter," Robert said, an angry flush struggling through the dead pallor of his face.

"Thank you," Hunter retorted. "I am sorry I couldn't give you time to draw on your friend Morrison!" And with a low, exultant laugh, he walked away.

The flush faded instantly from Robert Sherwood's face, and a look of despair settled down upon it. With an unsteady hand he opened the office door and went in.

"A bad business, Mr. Lindsey," the officer said, looking sorry.

"Yes," Lindsey answered abruptly, without looking up, a strange expression growing every instant in his face, and his gray eyes darkening to jetty black.

A moment or two more of struggle, and he followed his partner into the office.

"It is too late for what I proposed," he said, speaking hurriedly, like one who had made up his mind to do a thing and is in haste to have it over. "I have come to the conclusion that I signed Morrison's name. I shall be arrested for presenting the check—I shall at once admit that I did it on my own responsibility—"

"And bear the punishment for my guilt! No, I am not such a scoundrel as to suffer that, Lindsey," Sherwood interrupted.

"Hear me, Robert," he cried, laying his hand on his arm. "Think of your parents and Corrie. You can settle all these demands and have a home left for them, at least. You are young and capable, you can soon get into some business that will keep you all comfortably—and, pardon me for alluding to it, permit you to marry Miss Austin."

"We were to have been married in a month," he interrupted, sadly.

"Yes, I heard so. But if she is a true woman she will wait willingly, and sympathize with and encourage you, meanwhile. If

I am anything, or ever might have been, it is your kindness and sympathy that have done it. I ask it as a privilege, my best and truest friend, to bear this burden for you. There is no one dependent on me, now mother is dead, and no one will be pained or unhappy on my account. I am only a Lindsey, you know, and no one will be surprised; beside, I shall not suffer—" he was going to add, "because I have the consciousness of innocence," but checked himself, and substituted, "because I shall have the consciousness of repaying in part the great debt of gratitude I owe you."

Sherwood at first positively refused to listen to such a plan, but he was worn down with care and loss of rest, and mind and body were nearly exhausted in the struggle. He felt the force of Lindsey's reasoning, and at last yielded, weakly, perhaps, but not selfishly, for it was not of himself he thought, only of his father and mother, and Corrie—and possibly of Floy Austin; no man is willingly disgraced in the eyes of his betrothed wife.

Well, the blow had fallen, and all Grantley was confounded. But the bankruptcy, incredible as that seemed, was quite overshadowed by the dreadful turpitude of young Lindsey, though not a few were heard to declare that it was nothing more than was to be expected of a Lindsey, and they were not surprised in the least—in fact, had been expecting some such thing to happen ever since James Sherwood was so quixotic as to take the boy into his store. It seemed the whole trouble from first to last originated in Lindsey's crime, according to the odd logic of the Grantley-ites, though Robert Sherwood took every occasion to declare the true cause of bankruptcy to be an unwise and wild speculation. But this was set down as only another proof of foolish weakness in upholding and countenancing Alfred Lindsey—he had always done so.

Only one person in Grantley (save, of course, Robert Sherwood) believed in the possibility of Lindsey's innocence. Why should they, indeed, since he himself had admitted his guilt at the first? But Annie Morrison was a stubborn little thing when once she made up her mind to anything, and as determined as she was stubborn. It made her angry to see every one so willing—indeed, rather pleased—to believe evil of one who had fought his way up so bravely against the prejudices of his fellow-citizens. She had a natural love of

opposition, and so she espoused his cause, and was in her element. If there was any other reason that influenced her in the matter she did not admit it, even to herself. She managed to see him after his arrest just long enough to say, in a low voice:

"You don't suppose *I* believe this absurd story, Alfred? No, *I know* better, and *I am* going to prove it!"

"Miss Morrison, *I beg*," he began, but she nodded gayly, in a very positive way, and tripped away.

A sharp pang of regret, the first he had felt, shot heavily through his heart. He conquered the feeling after a little struggle. He knew he could never be anything to Annie Morrison—he had always tried to remember it, but a heart is a wayward thing to manage.

"She will never know that *I am* innocent," he said, a little sadly, "and, by-and-by she will come to think like the rest." And yet his heart beat lighter all day for that whispered word.

Before the day of trial came, Annie had nearly succeeded in converting her father to her belief in young Lindsey's innocence. She had a happy faculty of winding that personage round her finger. He had a great deal of faith in his Annie's judgment, and altogether believed her to be a most wonderful little woman.

"You see," said Annie, argumentatively, "it's not at all probable that he would do this when it wasn't going to benefit himself any, only to pay an old debt contracted by the firm six months before he was admitted into it. And, by the way, *I think* it a shabby trick in the Sherwoods taking any one into such a shaky concern as theirs very evidently was.

"*I think* they meant well, my dear," her father interposed, mildly.

"Perhaps," was the doubtful answer. "But now, father, *does* it look reasonable that any one would be so anxious to convict themselves if they were really guilty, as you say Mr. Lindsey was? You say he seemed 'feverishly eager to criminate himself.' Now is that natural, father?"

"Well, not generally, *I don't think*."

"Of course not. *I tell* you he is not guilty of this forgery, and if you send him to prison, you will do a very wicked thing," she said, vehemently.

"But, my child, he is in the hands of the law; it will not be as *I say*," he replied.

"But you can establish some test—see if he can write your hand—it is said that the imi-

tation was perfect—or require him to declare under oath that it was his work—something to get at the truth—for it is my firm belief that he is sacrificing himself to save the Sherwoods."

Mr. Morrison promised to mention these things to a legal friend and get his opinion; he did not know as he could do much more.

The day of the trial came round; it was only a formal one, the accused having confessed his guilt, and requested that no defence be made for him. A counsel had, however, been assigned to him, to sum up the extenuating circumstances, and beg that the court might be as lenient as possible in its sentence—considering the nature of the crime—in view of his youth and his previous good character.

But a new complexion was at once put upon affairs, by Clark Hunter's coming forward at the opening of the court and boldly charging the forgery upon Robert Sherwood. He stated that, knowing the financial affairs of the firm to be in a very ticklish condition, he had, in company with a detective from the city, kept an eye on the Sherwoods for several days previous to the time of the forgery. He knew of their dabbling in speculations, and learned of the failure of the concern perhaps before they did. He was a little surprised to find a new partner in the firm, and did not know but possibly he might have money. He waited to find out. He soon learned that it was only a poor clerk who had long been in their employ. He knew Gorham's note fell due the next day, and he had a natural curiosity to see how they managed to pay it. He was interested, from the fact that the Sherwoods owed their firm quite a sum. He saw Robert Sherwood come down to the store, and almost immediately young Lindsey go away. He looked into the store twice, but saw nothing of Sherwood. He afterward saw Lindsey come down to the store, and a moment after, looking in through the glass door, saw him behind the counter waiting on some ladies. Afterward, from the same position, saw Sherwood open the office door and beckon to Lindsey, who came out from behind the counter and followed him into the office. He then walked away down street, not caring to let Sherwood see him just then.

In a little less than ten minutes Sherwood came out of the store and walked hastily toward home. He then entered the store, several others also coming in. Bought a pair of gloves, and waited further develop-

ments. He had a theory that some means were to be put in operation to procure the money to meet Gorham's bill next day, and thought possibly the store and contents were to be mortgaged.

"Presently the sound of wheels made me lift my eyes," he continued, "and I saw Robert Sherwood, and a fellow whom I judged to be one of their servants drive up in a carriage. Lindsey went hastily out. There was no one in the store, and a strong impulse to open the office door and look in took possession of me. I did so, and the first thing that caught my eye was a piece of crumpled paper lying in front of the desk. I took it, and without looking at it, put it in my pocket and hurried out. Sherwood was still talking with Lindsey, who was seated in the carriage with the Irishman. I walked immediately out, and when at a sufficient distance, smoothed out the paper and read, 'T. D. Morrison' written in half a dozen places, together with the time and place of date. But the date was 'Sept. 11th,' instead of thirteenth as it really was. I was shocked at the suspicion that forced itself upon me. I had letters in Sherwood's hand, and I compared them with the writing on the paper, and saw at once that it was the same, only a little disguised. I had also a letter of Morrison's, and I remembered all at once that I had previously observed that there was a striking similarity between the handwriting of the two men."

"I knew Morrison had gone West. I wrote him immediately, asking if he had loaned Sherwood a sum of money to be drawn from the bank during his absence. He telegraphed back that he had not, and Mr. Dole and myself visited the bank, and found a check for \$5000 had been presented by Lindsey the afternoon of the 13th. We went down at once and put an attachment on the store. Subsequent developments you are familiar with. I demand now that Lindsey give us a proof of his handwriting being the same signed to the check, or that on this piece of paper," producing it and laying it on the table.

Lindsey firmly refused. There was a little excitement, and before it had subsided, Robert Sherwood, his face pale, yet firm, walked into court.

"Stop!" he interrupted. "It is I, who am the culprit—"

"No! no, it is not, gentlemen—O, do not mind what he says!" Lindsey cried, interrupting him. "O Robert! you promised me

you would not interfere," a pleading pathos in his voice.

"Damon and Pythias," sneered Hunter.

Well, of course the entire complexion of the matter was changed, and Robert Sherwood, the handsome, generous, talented son of one of the oldest and most respectable families of Grantley, was condemned to imprisonment for forgery, and Alfred Lindsey's noble conduct was on every tongue. Public opinion, that fickle creature, fell at once to abusing Robert Sherwood, and if it could have had the fixing of the sentence, I am afraid the gallows would have had another victim. By-and-by, however, the excited state of opinion subsided. Lindsey used every effort to soften the feeling against him, and at the end of a year succeeded in getting up a petition, headed by Mr. Morrison, for his pardon. After some delay it was granted, and Robert Sherwood, grown sadly old and altered in a year, came back to Grantley. During his incarceration, Lindsey had acted the part of a son to the poor, broken-down old man, who seemed little enough like the proud merchant of former years. All Grantley prophesied that Lindsey's love for Corrie Sherwood prompted him to this course of labor and sacrifice, as well as being at the bottom of his devotion to Robert. It is so hard for mankind to believe in the unselfishness of their fellows, or to conceive it possible that a warm and tender *friendship* can exist between a man and woman.

Well, as I said, Robert Sherwood came back to Grantley, broken in health and spirits, his good name tarnished, poverty and toil before him, a weak, almost imbecile father, and a helpless mother and sister dependent on him for support. Did his old friends, remembering all his long, upright life, his pure morality, his generous, noble nature, forgive him this one sin, committed under such great excitement and provocation, and not a deliberate wrong; and remembering their own liability to fall in some moment of terrible temptation, gather about him, and with words of encouragement, and kindly proffers of sympathy and assistance, hold up his fainting hands, and strengthen his fainting heart? Did they do this, do you think?

Alas! no. They held aloof from him, they said continually by their conduct, "we are holier than you," and managed in a hundred nameless ways to keep the fact of his disgrace continually before him. There were a

few noble exceptions. Mr. Morrison showed not only his true nobility as a gentleman, but his Christian spirit, in using every effort to make him feel how fully and thoroughly he forgave him, and wished to have it quite forgotten. He also tried bravely to combat the prejudices of his fellow-citizens, but with very indifferent success. Alfred Lindsey, now in business at Windsor Locks, helped and encouraged him in many ways, but his sensitive soul was slowly crushed under the hardness and coldness of his fellow-citizens, and like a tree dying at its core, he gradually lost strength and life, and people saw at last that he was dying, yet not one of them, perhaps, thought that possibly his blood would be required at their hands. There was a little convulsive sympathy then, but it was too late. There was, however, one beautiful ray of brightness that streamed out over his darkened life. Floy Austin had been true to her love for him, though her father had forbidden her to see him after his arrest. But when the story that he was dying came to her ears, she threw aside all parental control, and came to him, and insisted upon being his wife immediately. He objected faintly, but the thought of having her with him to the end, and of calling her at last by the sweet name of wife, was too pleasant to be long resisted, and so in the solemn shadow of death they were united in wedlock, and her hands ministered to his last earthly wants, and her loving faithfulness brightened the valley of shadows.

And so Robert Sherwood was dead—dead in the flush of his young manhood. If he erred and fell in that one terrible moment of bitter temptation, were they quite guiltless who barred the way of his return to honor, and virtue, and usefulness?

After Robert's death, Alfred Lindsey came up and took Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood and Corraline down to Windsor Locks. He knew how desolate and terrible the old place must seem to them now, and he promised Robert to make their grief as easy for them to bear as possible. Grantley people talked about it some, and wondered "why he didn't marry Corrie and done with it—it would certainly look better."

But one, two, three years went by, and both Alfred and Corrie kept on in the even

tenor of their way. There was nothing heard of marriage between them, but that a deep, and tender, and earnest affection existed between them, no one could doubt who knew them. Some people, not understanding pure and tender feeling, laughed, and made sneering remarks and innuendoes, but the poisonous arrows glanced off harmless from their strong armor of purity. But there came a change at last; a change that released Lindsey from his self-imposed life of labor and sacrifice in their behalf. Corrie Sherwood, quite unexpectedly to most people, though not to Alfred, married a wealthy gentleman in Hartford, who at once took her parents home to his house. The day after they left, Lindsey went up to Grantley. He had scarcely been there since Robert Sherwood died. There were reasons why he dared not trust himself to go there much.

Annie Morrison, a little paler and graver than on that autumn morning when she had ridden from Hartford to Grantley with Alfred Lindsey, sat lost in thought before a light fire that flickered through the twilight shadows of a gray October evening. A low rap sounded on the door. Of course it was her father, she was expecting him momentarily; so she said, with a little low laugh:

"Come in, if it's anybody that loves me."

The door opened and a gentleman came forward, pausing where the light fell across his face.

"Annie," he said, tenderly, "I could not stay outside when you said *that*."

Of course she gave a little feminine start and scream, and protested against his taking her so literally, because, of course, she was only in fun, besides, she was so sure it was her father. But when he told her in earnest, passionate words of his love for her all these years, and how he had not dared to come to her before lest her sweet face should make him forget the path of duty he had marked out for himself; and that now the burden was off his hands, and he was free to seek his own happiness, etc., etc., why, she quite broke down, and admitted between little happy, hysterical sobs, that "she had loved him always;" and when a little later Mr. Morrison really came in, he found his little girl the betrothed wife of Alfred Lindsey, and like a model father, added the paternal blessing.